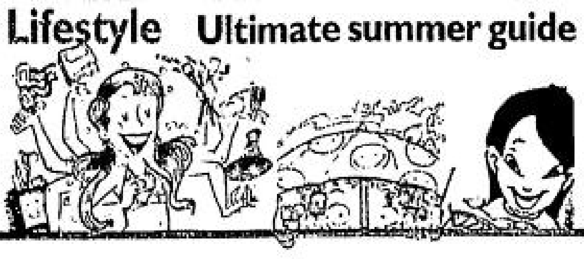
■News / A2

Gov't woos Henry Sy in SMC takeover

■Across / A20

How Bolinao villagers save marine resources

■ Lifestyle Ultimate summer guide



■Business/ B1

Peso bounces back: P55.80 to $1

Tanong ng Bayan / A24

Si FPJ: Taray King nga ba?

NGAYONG ALAS-10 NG GABI SA ABC

No more envelopes for Meralco power bills

AND NAMAN ANG PAKI-NABANG NAMIN D'YAN?

By Abigail L. Ho

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NO MORE/ A10

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

Wednesday, April 14, 2004 ★★ 66 pages / 7 sections / vol. 19 / no. 126 P18

website: www.inq7.net

Running mate says Roco agonized over 3 options

By Michael Lim Ubac, TJ Burgonio and Christine O. Avendano

BETWEEN BOUTS of pain, Raul Roco weighed three options confronting him before he finally decided yesterday to fade into the shadows.

The options the Alyansa ng Pag-Asa stan-

RUNNING/ A10

Ailing Roco flies to US

AGONIZING over three options, Raul Roco took a break at his rest house in Panglao Island, Bohol, a week before his startling announcement on Tuesday.

Raul went under knife in 1996

By Michael Lim Ubac and TJ Burgonio

IN 1996, Raul Roco went under the knife for a prostate operation.

"I don't hide that. It's on the record. But I've been very well since then. I've watched myself since then," Roco said yesterday when reached by phone at his home in La Vista, Quezon City.

The former senator and education secretary regularly submitted to general medical checkups. And before the campaign period, he said, his health had never been better.

According to Roco, even his blood pressure was normal (120 over 70), thanks to a regular intake of prescription drugs such as Norvast, which keeps the blood pressure "under control."

"You yourself can testify that I have been doing quite well in the

RAUL/ A22

ERIK ARAZAS

THINNER, paler at his press conference but "I will fight on."

Shocked youth supporters: Like losing the heart but we will continue the fight

By TJ Burgonio and Michael Lim Ubac

RAUL Roco's announced decision yesterday to leave the critical remaining days of the campaign to his ticket has disheartened his young volunteers.

"It's like losing the heart. [It's] like the heart being physically severed from the body because it needs treatment. That's how it is," lawyer Darwin Mariano, founder of Aksyon Kabataan, said in an interview.

Mariano said many members of his group were "still in shock" over Roco's decision to seek medical treatment in the United States for chronic back pain. He said the Alyansa ng Pag-Asa standard-bearer broke the news to them early yesterday, shortly before announcing it to the media.

"But we will fight," declared Mariano, a member of the Esguerra & Blanco law offices. "The Aksyon Kabataan has been used to uphill battles; this has become a little more uphill."

Roco himself, wearing his regulation floral-printed shirt, used fighting words in making the announcement in an 11:35 a.m. press conference at the Alyansa headquarters in the Strata 2000 Building in Pasig City. His running mate Herminio Aquino and their seven senatorial candidates were present.

"For the sake of every Filipino who needs to be given a choice between corrupt and incompetent

AILING ROCO/ A22

'De facto withdrawal' boosts GMA, pressures rivals

By Ruben Alabastro
Desk Editor

THE ABRUPT departure of former Sen. Raul Roco from the political scene effectively means the end of his run for the presidency, boosting President Macapagal-Arroyo's chances of victory in May and putting her rivals under a massive pressure to unite or perish, analysts say.

"It's now a situation where she (Ms Macapagal) is the one to beat," said Philippine-based Australian business executive Peter Wallace, chairman of the Wallace Business Forum, which advises multinationals on country risks.

Roco, the former education secretary and standard-bearer of the Alyansa ng Pag-Asa, set off a potentially wild political scramble when he announced yesterday that he was leaving for the United States immediately for treatment of chronic lower back pains. *(See stories on this page.)*

His suggestion that he had a serious medical condition—"it could debilitate me"—in effect means he would be gone for quite a while and at a crucial time when the campaign for the May 10 presidential election is surging to the homestretch.

Is Roco's departure tantamount to a graceful exit from a race in which he has, for weeks, been struggling a distant third behind Ms Macapagal and movie actor Fernando Poe Jr. in opinion surveys conducted by prestigious pollsters?

Wallace and two leading Philippine political analysts—Antonio Gatmaitan and Joel Rocamora—said they would not want to view Roco's move that way.

But Gatmaitan called it "a de facto withdrawal."

Last week, the INQUIRER learned that Roco was on the verge of drop-

DE FACTO/ A22

UNITE OR ELSE

FPJ slams Lacson, defends Angara

By Carlito Pablo and Norman Bordadora

VIGAN, Ilocos Sur—Fernando Poe Jr. yesterday slammed opposition presidential rival Panfilo Lacson for suggesting that Sen. Edgardo Angara, a key supporter of the movie actor, be booted out of the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino.

"I think that what Senator Lacson said was uncalled for," Poe told reporters here.

"But still, we're hoping for unification," Poe said, acknowledging that he and Lacson would still have a follow-up meeting to the one they had last Sunday. "I'll do anything for the sake of unification."

But Poe is sure of one thing: he is not going to withdraw from the presidential race.

"That will not happen," he said.

Poe also reiterated his previous statement that Sen. Loren Legarda would continue to be his vice presidential running mate.

The opposition is seeking a single candidate to beat President Macapagal-Arroyo, who had gained the lead over Poe in the latest Pulse Asia survey. The survey, conducted from March 27 to

FPJ/ A10

EDWIN BACASMAS

"DA KING" MEETS ILOCOS KINGPIN. Imelda Marcos escorts Fernando Poe Jr. to view the waxen remains of her late husband at the ancestral Marcos home in Batac, Ilocos Norte.

'Da King' downplays GMA lead

By Carlito Pablo, Norman Bordadora and Cynthia D. Balana

VIGAN, Ilocos Sur—Fernando Poe Jr. and his allies are unfazed by the results of the latest Pulse Asia survey showing that President Macapagal-Arroyo had overtaken him.

"As I have said before, no matter what comes out in the surveys, we'll continue to hit the campaign trail," Poe told reporters here.

Poe acknowledged that his Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino was "still trying to raise funds" for the May 10 national

DA KING/ A10

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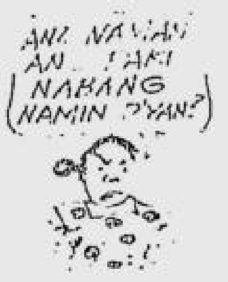
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Shocked youth supporters: Like losing the heart but we will continue the fight

By TJ Burgonio and Michael Lim Ubac

RAUL Roco's announced decision yesterday to leave the critical remaining days of the campaign to his ticket has disheartened his young volunteers.

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Mariano said many members of his group were "still in shock" over Roco's decision to seek medical treatment in the United States for chronic back pain. He [illegible] said the [illegible] ard-be[illegible] "Bu[illegible] Ma[illegible] gue[illegible] Bl[illegible] Roc[illegible] [illegible] stan[illegible] news [illegible] ently be[illegible] dia[illegible] lared [illegible] "Th[illegible] becom[illegible]

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"For the sake of every Filipino who needs to be given a choice be[illegible] corrupt and incompeten[illegible]

A7

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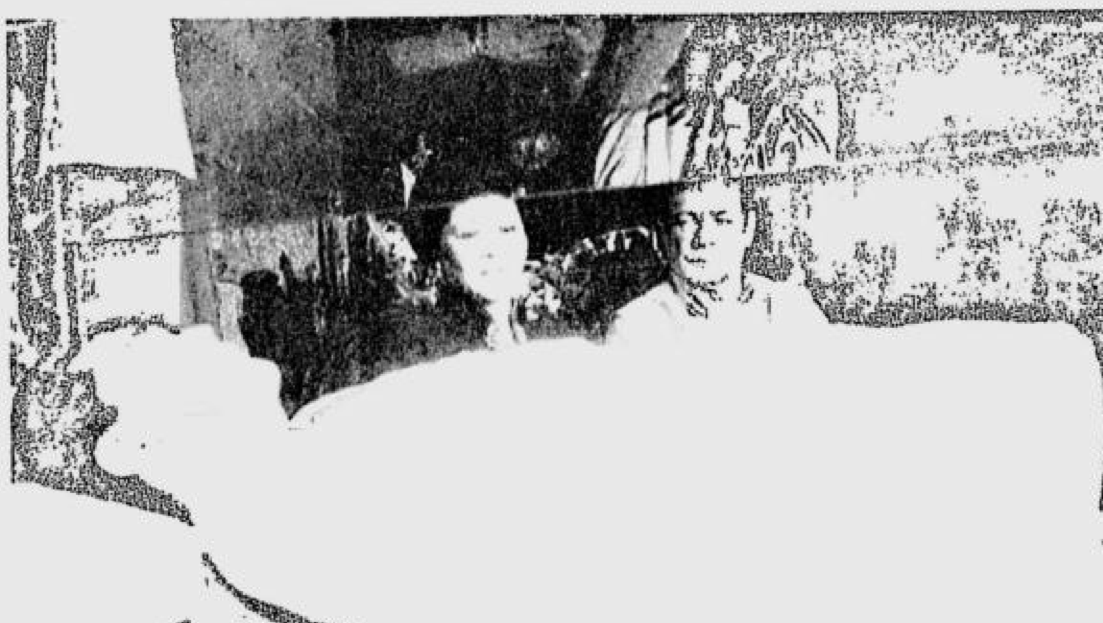

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VIG[illegible]AN [illegible] Fernando [illegible] dazed [illegible] Pulse [illegible] Presi[illegible] over [illegible] Ma[illegible]

KING

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WEATHER FORECAST

ORECAST: The whole country will experience partly cloudy to at mes cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.
SOURCE PAGASA

OMPILED BY RAY LEYESA PDI RESEARCH/04/14/04

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Partly Cloudy

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Second FRONT PAGE

Gov't woos Sy in SMC takeover

3y Dona Pazzibugan

THE GOVERNMENT is wooing shopping mall magnate Henry Sy to its side in its bid to wrest control of San Miguel Corp. from controversial businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr.

SMC, the country's biggest company, will elect a new board at its annual stockholders' meeting next week.

The government needs just one more ally in the board to take control of the food and beverage conglomerate which it sequestered as part of the disputed assets of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos and his cronies.

It is trying to persuade Sy to give t the one vote it needs, said Haydee Yorac, chair of the Presidential Commission on Good Government, the agency tasked to recover funds believed to have been stolen by Marcos and his associates.

Of the 15 SMC board seats, Cojuangco controls eight, one of which belongs to Sy, who acquired a 6.2 percent stake in SMC last year.

The government controls the remaining seven seats. The PCGG has five while the state-run pension firms, the Social Security System and the Government Service Insurance System, have one nominee each.

"I have asked the government people to talk to Henry Sy but it's so difficult because this is an election year," Yorac told a Foreign Correspondents of the Philippines forum yesterday.

The country goes to the polls to elect a new President, Vice President and 17,000 officials at all levels of government on May 10, leaving businessmen unsure of which administration they will be dealing with later this year.

Yorac said it was "a big if" whether Sy would be even open to the government's overtures.

One analyst at a foreign brokerage house said there was no chance Sy would align himself with the government sine he invested in SMC on the prodding of Cojuangco who wanted another ally to seal his hold on the company.

The PCGG sequestered 47 percent of SMC shares in the 1980s following the downfall of Marcos. The seized shares included a 20 percent bloc in Cojuangco's name.

The shares are tied up in litigation, with the government alleging that Marcos and Cojuangco used funds from a an illegal levy imposed on coconut farmers to acquire the SMC shares.

PCGG nominees already vote the 27 percent bloc of SMC shares listed under the Coconut Industry Investment Fund companies.

It wants to gain control of the company to protect the government's interests in the firm and have more clout in the decisions of the board.

Last October, Cojuangco won provisional control over the disputed 20 percent stake, giving him three board seats. The rest are owned by shareholders supportive of him, including Japan's Kirin Brewery, whose 15 percent stake gives it two seats.

The PCGG is waiting for the Sandiganbayan anti-graft court to finally decide on the ownership of the 47 percent.

If the Sandiganbayan finally decides that the government owns the 47 percent bloc, Yorac said the government would push for an international sale to fetch the best price for the shares.

"I really do not believe that government should be in business, because government is subject to all sorts of pressures, political and otherwise," Yorac said.

She said Cojuangco would be allowed to bid for the shares if he wants to retain control of management of the firm.

At the same Focap forum, Yorac said the hundreds of millions of dollars seized from Marcos's Swiss bank accounts would be set aside to compensate Filipino human rights victims, but the money can't be used to settle private claims pending in a Hawaii court.

The Supreme Court ruled last year that US$683 million in Marcos' Swiss bank deposits were illegally amassed and awarded the money to the government. *With reports from Reuters, AFP and AP*

ARELLANO UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW PRIMUS INTER PARES

Hail to the 91 New Arellano Lawyers!

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AGBAYANI, Rommel Chrisante F.
AGUILAR, Jr. Jose P.
AGUIRRE, Ma. Luisa L.
ALAMADA-MAGAYANES, Sharon M.
ALONDAY, Pearl Joy A.
APARICIO, Romel A.
AQUINO, Robertson R.
BABANO, Wilfred S.
BARRION, Zennia C.
CABASUG, Elegio D.
CADER, Sittie Phamy G.
CALINGASAN, Karlo L.
CASTRO, Joselito C.
CAYABYAB, Odgie c.
CHUN, Ian Steven C.
CLEMENTE, Clemente M.
COTAY, Cathleen Elizabeth L.
DELA CRUZ, Remelito M.
DE LEON, Sheila B.
DELMORO, Joebil B.
DEOCAMPO, Leo B.
DIZON, Clarence S.
DUMBRIQUE-VILLAVICENCIO, Rose Anne B.
DY, Dennis L.
FAJARDO, Jr., Agapito F.
FAJARDO, Leilani R.
FAJARDO, Rey Christopher D.
FALCOTELO, Rochelle Ann L.
FULTON, Kenneth P.
GALICIA, Noel M.
GAMBOL, Jessica A.
GAYAPA, Kristine Marie Therese O.
GENESELA, Cliff Richard E.
GIANAN, Jr. Fredeswindo A.
GOLEZ, Norman T.
GRIMALDO, Rodel R.
GUERZON, Elmer Joseph R.
GUILLERMO, Adela S.
GUILLERMO, Maria Vida M.
HERNANDEZ, Jr. Arsenio M.
IROG, Arnel C.
JACOB, Louella C.
JAMORA, Alfred Joseph T.
JIMENO, Jennifer A.
KATIGBAK, George S.
LABO, Jr. Eduardo L.
LAVARIAS, Jr. Lope A.
LILAGAN, Freddie V.
LIWANAG, Geraldine C.
MACALDO Jr. Felipe E.
MACARAIG, Allan Dexter P.
MACARAYA, Jr. Alan Felix J.
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MADELAR, Ma. Ramona P.
MANAIG, Michelle C.
MARASIGAN, Arth Jhun A.
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MELLA, Danny J.
MIRABUENO, Marion Gay C.
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NAVARRO, Dexter L.
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PASCUA, Edward S.
PUNCIA, Maria Alma Corazon H.
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RAMOS, Regina Paz A.
RAMOSO, Ian P.
REYES, Maria Rehgeis C.
RIVERA, Neil Randy P.
SACRO, Roderick P.
SALGADO, Alwin N.
SALVADOR, Barry Boy A.
SANTILLAN-VISTO, Sta. Cecilia M.
SAYAGO, Felix S.
SIAYNGCO, Jeremy C.
SINGZON, Loralaine S.
SOLIS, Ronald L.
SOMERA, Jr. Dencio G.
SUBIERA, Cielita S.
TAGALICUD, Nonilon L.
TALON, Mae Antonnette F.
TAN, Dante E.
TENORIO, Grachielle E.
TOBIAS, Jr. Ludovino Joseph Augusto L.
TORRES, Jr. Francisco E.
TUAZON-ALBERTO, Cristina T.
ZAPANTA, Jason J.

A testimonial dinner will be tendered for the new Arellano lawyers on Wednesday, April 28, 2004 to be preceded by a thanksgiving mass at 4:00 p.m. at the Arellano University School of Law campus, Taft Avenue corner Menlo Street, Pasay City. The successful candidates are requested to contact Gina, Margie or Abi at Telephone Nos. 4043089-93 for confirmation of attendance.

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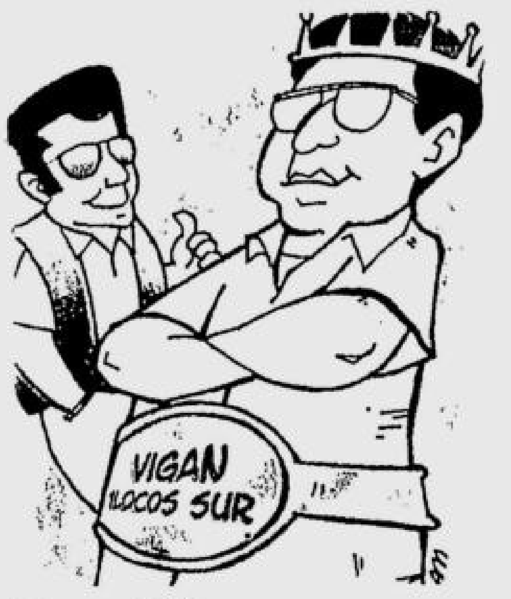
For reservations call 404-3091 to 92



In Ilocos, FPJ is not 'Da King'

By Carlito Pablo

VIGAN, Ilocos Sur—Even Da King of Philippine movies makes no mistake that when he's in town, there is only one king: Luis "Chavit" Singson.

Actor Fernando Poe Jr. had complied with Singson's condition that he should neither raise the hand of or endorse rival Efren Rafanan if he wants his votes "protected" in this province.

In a rally in Candon town, Poe didn't go up the stage to endorse Rafanan, official candidate of the opposition Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino for the gubernatorial post of the province, the same post Singson is seeking to reclaim in the May elections under the administration ticket.

In his talk with reporters in this city, Singson said that he and Poe had been longtime friends, with the association predating that of his with deposed President Joseph Estrada.

"As a personal friend, his votes will be protected here," said Singson, whose jueteng expose started a chain of events that led to the ouster of Poe's bosum friend Estrada in the Edsa 2 revolt in 2001.

"But that depends on his action here. If he campaigns for my political enemy, he'll lose votes," warned Singson, a staunch supporter of President Macapagal-Arroyo who succeeded Estrada in office. *With a report from Leoncio Balbin Jr., PDI Northern Luzon*

Bacani denies endorsing Poe

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE SPIRITUAL adviser of the Catholic charismatic group El Shaddai yesterday denied endorsing the candidacy of actor Fernando Poe Jr., who was present during the El Shaddai's Easter Mass.

Bishop Teodoro Bacani said that he "never endorsed the actor" and was not pertaining to Poe when he urged the people to vote wisely.

Bacani further said the focus of his Easter message at the El Shaddai gathering was the value and meaning of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, not the perceived persecution of Poe in this elections.

Poe, standard-bearer of the opposition Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino, arrived at the El Shaddai overnight vigil at 11 p.m. Saturday and stayed on until 2 a.m. Sunday. After him, another opposition presidential bet, Panfilo Lacson, arrived at 4 a.m.

President Macapagal-Arroyo herself is courting the votes of the Catholic charismatic group, which claims a membership of more than three million. The group's leader, Mike Velarde, endorsed the candidacy of former President Joseph Estrada in the 1998 presidential elections.

Abducted Pinoy truck driver released in Iraq, now in Jordan

THE STILL unidentified Filipino truck driver who was with the group of foreigners abducted and later released by an armed group in Iraq has returned safely to Amman, Jordan's capital.

"I am glad the lone Filipino captive in Iraq was released unharmed," President Macapagal-Arroyo said in a written statement, adding that she was directing the Department of Foreign Affairs to ensure "maximum protective measures" for the Filipino peacekeeping contingent in Iraq.

The Philippines had sent 96 soldiers, policemen and health workers to Iraq but Presidential Spokesman Ignacio Bunye said only a little over half are still there.

The President said the Cabinet Oversight Committee on Internal Security was "reassessing the situation and calibrating our options" in the face of mounting calls for a pull-out of foreign nationals in Iraq because of the perceived inability of the US-led coalition force to keep in check the bombings, killings and abductions by Iraqi rebel groups.

"I would like to assure that the safety and security of our nationals is on top of the government agenda and close monitoring is in place," she added.

Foreign Affairs Undersecretary for Migrant Workers' Affairs Jose Brillantes said Vicente Endaya, charge d'affaires in Iraq, confirmed that the Filipino, along with three Pakistanis, two Afghans, two Turks and one Nepalese were drivers for the coalition forces in Iraq and were on their way to Fallujah to deliver food supplies when they were captured by the armed group on April 11.

The hostages later appeared on the Arabic television station Al-Jazeera before they were freed the same day, in response to an appeal by Shiite clerics to militants to spare civilians.

Endaya also tried, but failed, to verify the Filipino's identity from his counterparts at the Pakistani, Turkish and Indian embassies as well as Al-Jazeera officials.

The DFA earlier said some Filipinos in Iraq work for firms in Europe, Jordan and Kuwait, and were either contracted or subcontracted for rehabilitation projects in Iraq. It does not have a record of Filipino workers in Iraq. *Jerome Aning, Gil Cabacungan Jr., Niel Lim, Leila Salaverria, AFP*

6-6 SPLIT

Roxas leads Senate race

By Dona Pazzibugan

EVEN the race in the Senate could be a close fight, with the "Magic 12" split between President Macapagal-Arroyo and Fernando Poe Jr.'s candidates if elections were held today.

In its March 27 to April 4 survey, Pulse Asia said the administration Koalisyon ng Katapatan at Karanasan para sa Kinabukasan (K4) and the oopposition Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino (KNP) had six candidates each in the top 12 slots.

Former trade secretary Mar Roxas topped the survey for the first time, with 40.1 per cent followed by fellow administration candidate Ramon Revilla Jr., with 39.1 per cent.

KNP's Alfredo Lim and Juan Ponce Enrile came next, with 33.3 per cent and 32.5 per cent respectively. Others in the top 12: Miriam Defensor-Santiago, 30.5 per cent (K4); Sen. Aquilino Pimentel, 29.7 per cent (KNP); Ernesto Maceda, 29.4 per cent (KNP); John Osmena, 29 per cent (K4); Jinggoy Estrada, 28.1 per cent (KNP); Lito Lapid, 27.5 per cent (K4); Jamby Madrigal, 27.1 per cent (KNP); and Richard Gordon, 26.9 per cent (K4).

K4's Rodolfo Biazon and Robert Barbers are a breath away, with 25.4 per cent and 25.1 per cent respectively.

Madrigal showed the biggest improvement, jumping from 18th place in February, to 11th place . Lapid, Biazon, and Herrera, however, dropped six notches or more.

Orly Mercado (K4), Francisco Tatad (KNP), Robert Jaworski (K4) and Ernesto Herrera (KNP), within winning range last February, have dropped out of the top 12.

In the party list survey, Bayan Muna remained the top choice.

Pulse Asia tapped 4,800 registered voters nationwide as respondents for its latest survey, which has a plus or minus 1.4 per cent margin of error.

Bro. Eddie still confident of win

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr. and Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—With barely a month before the May 10 elections, Bangon Pilipinas standard-bearer Bro. Eddie Villanueva remains confident of winning the presidency despite trailing in the surveys.

Villanueva, who spoke here on Monday at a fund-raising dinner organized by Iloilo businessmen and professionals supporting his candidacy, said the survey results did not reflect the "groundswell of support" he has been getting in his campaign sorties.

Villanueva, founder of the Jesus is Lord Church Worldwide, was at the tail-end of presidential candidates in the latest Pulse Asia survey with 3 percent of respondents picking him to be the next chief executive.

Way ahead of him were new front-runner President Macapagal-Arroyo with 34 percent, opposition Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino bet Fernando Poe Jr. with 31 percent, former Education Secretary Raul Roco, 12 percent, and Sen. Panfilo Lacson, 10 percent.

The preacher said he was not discounting the possibility the surveys were tainted by corruption after the survey firms sub-contracted the polling of respondents.

But he said he was not accusing anyone of "suppressing" the surveys.

"But I am wondering why my ratings remained [low] even after the rally at Rizal Park," Villanueva said.

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Martin Marfil and Blanche Rivera

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Comelec junks another DQ case vs GMA

By Martin P. Marfil

THE COMMISSION on Elections yesterday dismissed a disqualification petition against President Macapagal-Arroyo, the second of 10 such cases brought before the body.

The petition said the President's certificate of candidacy was not valid as she did not take her oath before a qualified officer.

In a resolution issued yesterday, the Comelec's 2nd division headed by Commissioner Mehol Sadain, said the case filed by broadcaster Mel Chavez lacked merit and was filed beyond the required five days after the last day for the filing of certificates of candidacy.

Chavez, president of the Asosasyon ng Komentarista at Anaunser ng Pilipinas, or AKAP, filed the case on Jan. 30, 2004. The last day of filing of candidacy certificates was Jan. 5.

No notary public

He asked the Comelec to void Ms Macapagal's certificate of candidacy as she took her oath before an assistant city prosecutor, not a notary public as required by law.

According to Chavez, Ms Macapagal either appeared before the prosecutor or the prosecutor appeared before her to take the oath.

Either way, the prosecutor lacked the authority to administer the oath which rendered the President's certificate of candidacy a mere scrap of paper, he said.

But the Comelec's second division, composed of Sadain, Florentino Tuason and Manuel Barcelona, dismissed the petition saying that it lacked merit and was filed more than five days after the last day of filing of certificates of candidacy.

Ms Macapagal's lawyer, Alberto Agra, hailed the Comelec decision and expressed confidence the eight other cases would be similarly dismissed.

Chavez's lawyer Eli Pamatong, a presidential aspirant who was earlier disqualified by the Comelec, said they would be filing a motion for reconsideration.

No faith in Comelec

But after saying this, Pamatong said he was withdrawing from the case as he had lost faith in the commission.

"For the record, I am withdrawing my participation or involvement in this case because I have completely, totally and conditionally lost faith in the system and, with due respect to the commissioners, I have completely lost my respect and faith in the Comelec," Pamatong said.

"Duly noted ... next case, please," Sadain said in response.

The disqualification cases filed against Ms Macapagal include one by a party-list group claiming that the President should be disqualified because she failed to fulfill her promise not to run in 2004. The case was dismissed and is on appeal.

Another was filed by a presidential aspirant who was barred by the Comelec from running in the 2004 elections. It said that Ms Macapagal should resign before running to "level the playing field."

A third petition filed by M. Abdulazis Paiso asked the Comelec to disqualify Ms Macapagal because of a constitutional ban against a second term.

TV over-exposure

The fourth case was that filed by Chavez and the fifth was filed on March 15 by a lawyer member of the Pro-Con(stitution) group who said that the President violated the Comelec resolution limiting television campaign advertising.

The sixth petition was filed on March 24 by two Pro-Con members who alleged that the President violated the Omnibus Election Law when she ordered the implementation of the enhanced Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office's Greater Medicare Access program.

The seventh was filed by former Bureau of Land Transportation chief Mariano Santiago who said that Ms Macapagal should be disqualified because she was allegedly using P1.4 billion of the road users tax for her campaign.

The eighth case was filed by lawyer Oliver Lozano in connection with the Maynilad compromise deal between the government and the Lopez family while the ninth was filed by Alyansa ng Pag-asa senatorial candidates Nicanor Gatmaytan Jr. and Olivia "Bong" Coo.

Graduation message

Gatmaytan and Coo alleged that Ms Macapagal violated election laws and the Constitution when she ordered that her message calling on graduating students and their parents to support a "strong and tried leadership" be read by education officials in graduation ceremonies.

The tenth was filed by by Mike Planas, an opposition candidate in Quezon City, who accused Ms Macapagal of premature campaigning.

The hearing yesterday concerning charges that Ms Macapagal had overshot the 120-minute limit for television advertisements was reset for April 22 after the lawyers failed to agree on the important facts of the case and because of the absence of witnesses.

Among the witnesses who were called were former Comelec information chief Ferdinand Rafanan and representatives from various television stations.

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PRES. ELPIDIO QUIRINO	Friday, April 16, 2004	Saturday, April 17, 2004
GOV. DEMETRIO QUIRINO, SR.	Friday, April 23, 2004	Saturday, April 24, 2004
SEC. GUILLERMO DE VEGA	Thursday, April 29, 2004	Friday, April 30, 2004

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PLACE OF EXAMINATIONS — TIP Manila and TIP Quezon City

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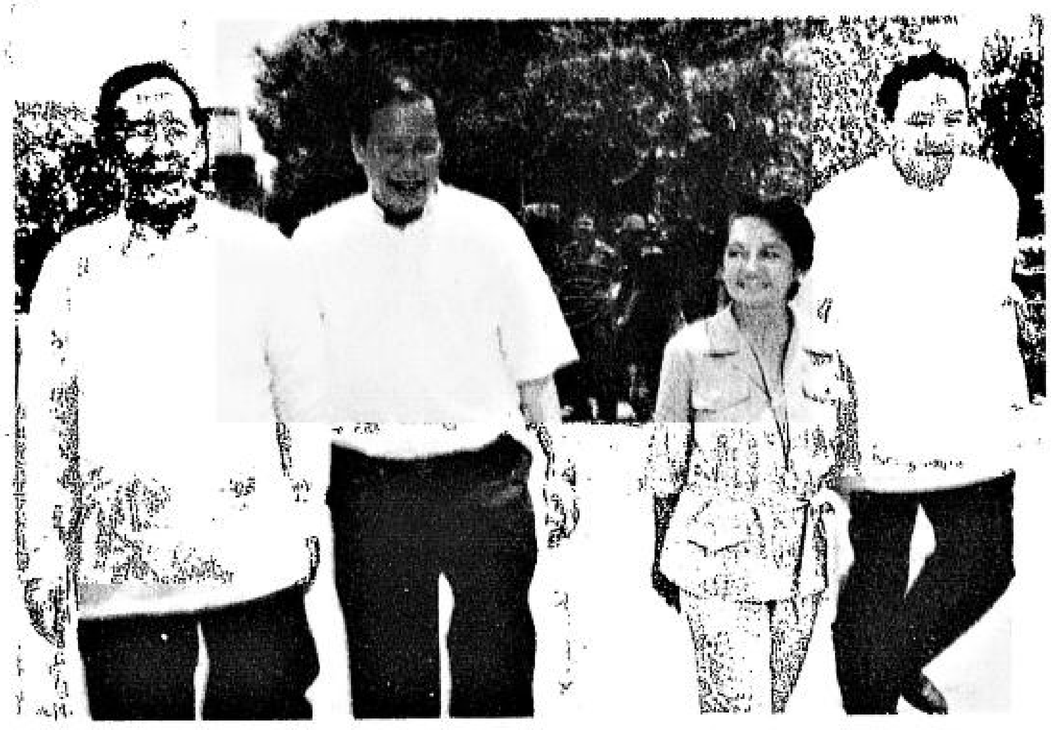


PRESIDENT Macapagal walks with the two congressmen of Tarlac, Benigno Aquino III and Gilbert Teodoro (right), who assured the President of their support in the coming elections. Teodoro, nephew of NPC kingpin Eduardo Cojuangco Jr., led NPA congressmen in expressing support for Ms Macapagal. At left is Rodolfo Romulo, president of Camiling Colleges where the President was guest speaker recently.

More NPC solons back GMA

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

MORE CONGRESSMEN belonging to the Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC) yesterday trooped to Malacañang to express their support for President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Gabriel Claudio, campaign manager of the administration's K4 coalition, said 30 NPC congressmen and officials either expressed or reiterated their backing of the President during lunch at the Palace.

The visit occurred after the latest Pulse Asia survey showed Ms Macapagal taking a small lead over her main rival, opposition Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino (KNP) bet Fernando Poe Jr.

"This effectively refutes the claim of a minority in the NPC that the party is for FPJ," Claudio said.

Claudio said the NPC gathering supportive of Poe organized by KNP senatorial candidate Ernesto Maceda at Club Filipino last month was "dismal and paled in comparison" with the NPC lunch at Malacañang.

He said those who came to lunch were NPC Representatives Joseph "Ace" Durano, Nerissa Soon-Ruiz and Simeon Kintanar of Cebu, Jess Falcon of Surigao del Sur, Gener Tulagan and Conrad Estrella of Pangasinan, Tomas Dumpit of La Union, Perpetuo Ilagan of Romblon, Alipio Badelles and Benasing Macarambon of Lanao del Sur, Douglas Cagas of Davao del Sur, Roseller Barinaga of Zamboanga del Norte, Rimpy Bondoc of Pampanga, Georgidi Aggabao and Faustino Dy III of Isabela, JJ Romualdo of Camiguin, Vince Garcia of Davao City, Felix William Fuentebella of Camarines Sur, Ed Veloso of Leyte, Marcelino Libanan of Eastern Samar, Jesli Lapuz of Tarlac, Gerardo Espina of Biliran, Cynthia Layus and Boboy Nepomuceno of Cagayan and Joseph Santiago of Catanduanes.

Also present were Isabela Gov. Faustino Dy, NPC chair, and members Rodito Albano and Benguet Gov. Raul Molintas.

Claudio said those who were not able to come called up the President to express their support—Tarlac Rep. Gilbert Teodoro, Pangasinan Representatives Mark Cojuangco and Amado Espino and Laguna Rep. Uliran Joaquin.

Teodoro, the favorite nephew of NPC founder Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco, and the business tycoon's two sons Mark and Carlos, who is the congressman of Negros Occidental, had earlier endorsed the President's candidacy.

The elder Cojuangco's endorsement, however, remained elusive.

"I cannot speak for him. I think the NPC leadership has been consistent with the policy of giving members a free hand," said Claudio, when asked if the NPC support for the President indicated the elder Cojuangco's sentiments.

Rebs free mayor's escort

AFTER almost 33 hours in the hands of New People's Army (NPA) rebels, PO1 Ronald Reanzares was freed unhurt, on Monday night in a far-flung village in Bongabong, Oriental Mindoro.

Government troops in the island province remained resolute about not negotiating for the freedom of two more soldiers still being held hostage.

Mayor Alex Aranas of Pola, Oriental Mindoro told the INQUIRER in a phone interview that leaders of the NPA's Lucio de Guzman Command agreed to release Reanzares after a successful negotiation with Vice Mayor Arturo Martinez.

On Sunday, around 30 NPA rebels abducted Aranas, Martinez and eleven of their staff and security aides who were campaigning in Barangay Campamento in Pola town. They were snatched allegedly for the politician's refusal to pay permit-to-campaign fees to the insurgents.

Hours later, all the hostages were freed, except for Reanzares and Army Privates Michael Rapadas and Joel Javier. Aranas earlier said the three were his security escorts.

At 11 p.m. Monday, minutes after the negotiation, the mayor said, he met up with Martinez and Reanzares in nearby Socorro town.

Despite an earlier statement that he gave cash to Martinez to buy Reanzares' freedom, Aranas claimed that "not a single centavo" was paid for the policeman's release.

Higom Maragang, spokesperson of the NPA Lucio de Guzman command, said in a phone interview that Reanzares was released "for humanitarian considerations, since he is a local cop. He is still new in the force and still without any blood debts against the people."

Maragang said money exchanged hands, but not as ransom. "We are not a kidnap for ransom syndicate," he said, "we're revolutionaries." The money was "part of Aranas' payment" of PTC fees, he stressed but did not reveal the total amount due.

Rapadas and Javier have been declared "prisoners of war," and would not be set free just now, Maragang said.

Col. Fernando Mesa, head of the Philippine Army's 204th Infantry Brigade based in Naujan town, clarified that the two were assigned not to Aranas but to the Pola police station, as augmentation forces following an NPA attack a few years back. *Marlon Ramos, Delfin T. Mallari Jr. and Donna T. Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau, with a report from Christian V. Esguerra*

2 more Basilan escapees slain

TWO down, 23 more to pursue.

Two inmates who bolted the Basilan provincial jail on Black Saturday were killed in a shoot-out with government troops in Lantawan town Monday night.

Col. Raymundo Ferrer, commander of the 103rd Army Brigade, identified the slain escapees as Mobin Sarikin and Sattar Muctar.

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Public Information Office chief Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero said Sarikin was a member of the Abu Sayyaf group, while Muctar was a common criminal.

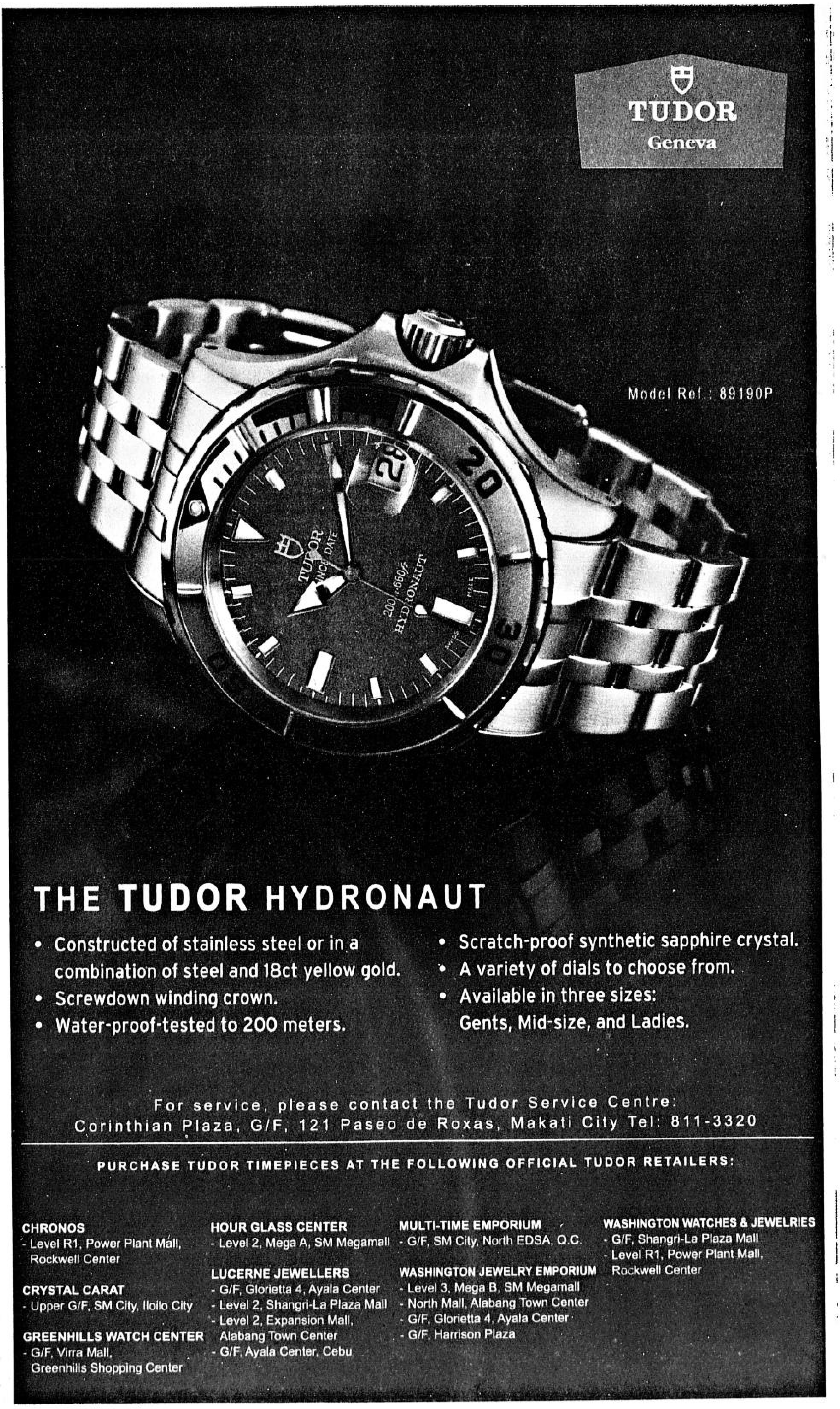
Lucero said government troops and police caught up with the two at around 11 p.m. in the Upper Mangas area on the coastal part of the island. This is about three kilometers west of the Basilan provincial jail where they escaped and 15 km away from the Sampinit complex, a known lair of the ASG in the center of the island.

He said the two resisted capture and fired back at government troops.

He said the ASG is in disarray and dismissed speculations that the escapees are being aided by other comrades. "We don't think they are regrouping ... They have no commander in the island since the neutralization of Hamsiraji Sali."

Sali was killed in a firefight last Thursday.

A total of 53 inmates, including 24 ASG members escaped from the Basilan provincial jail on Black Saturday after disarming and killing one of the guards. Thirty inmates have been recaptured or killed since the jailbreak. *Alcuin Papa, Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau and Christian V. Esguerra*



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Employees oppose Maynilad 'bailout'

THE EMPLOYEES of Maynilad Water Services Inc. have asked a Quezon City regional trial court to disapprove the debt-equity swap deal between the water concessionaire and the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System.

Speaking through their lawyer, Manuel B. Imbong, the employees claimed in a motion they filed before the QC RTC Branch 90 that the deal is grossly disadvantageous to the government considering that the shares of stocks of Maynilad has no recoverable value. They said the company is bankrupt having more liabilities than assets.

Imbong said the deal, which gives unwarranted benefits to Maynilad, violates the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act (RA 3019) and hence, illegal.

Moreover, Imbong said that MWSS has no authority to invest its funds to other corporation as this is not among its powers granted by the law which created MWSS.

"Maynilad cannot change the previous rehabilitation plan with the debt-equity swap deal because having been filed with the Court, the declaration in the rehabilitation plan is conclusive on Maynilad and can no longer change it," the lawyer said. *Tina Santos*

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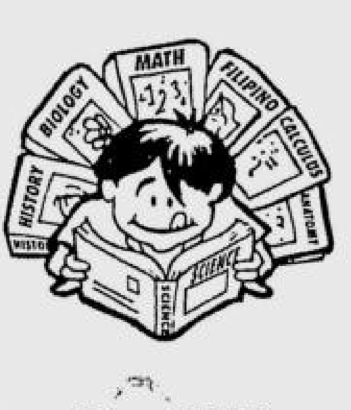

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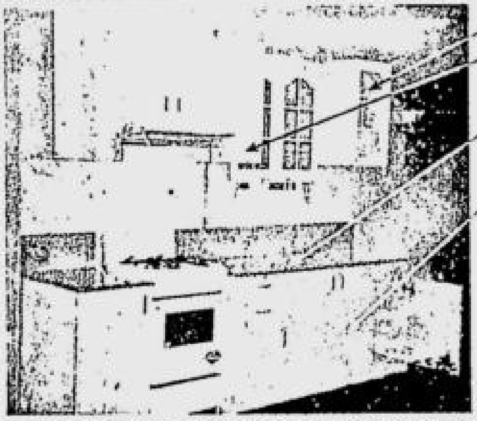
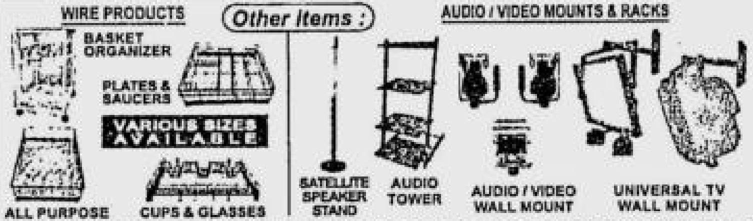
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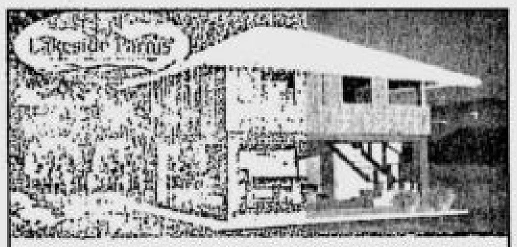
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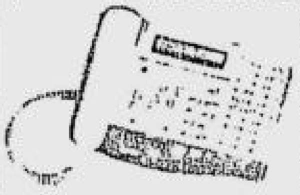
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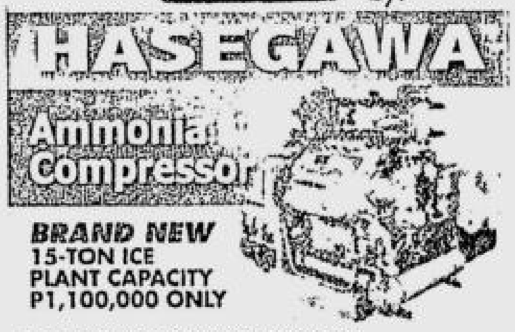
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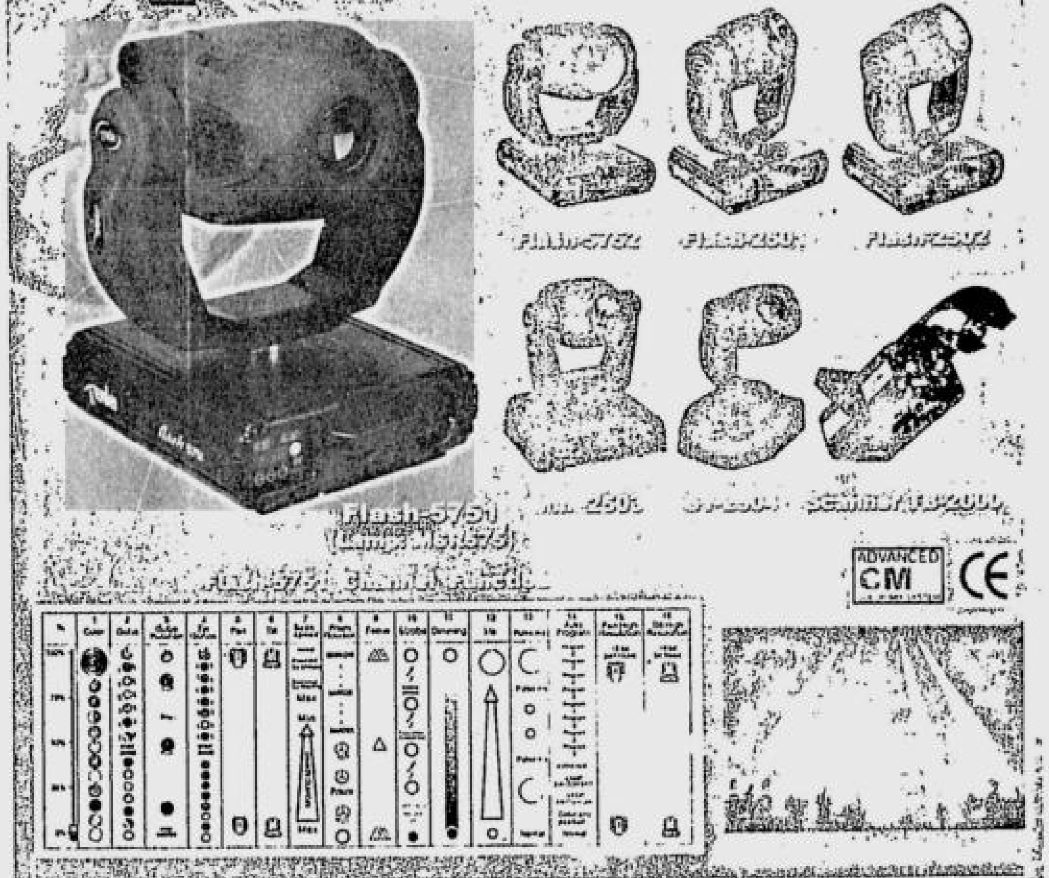

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Abus seized Indons, Malaysians, Navy confirms

By Alcuin Papa

THE PHILIPPINE Navy confirmed yesterday that members of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) were behind the abduction of an Indonesian and two Malaysians from a tugboat in the waters between the Philippines and Malaysia on April 11.

Quoting reports, Navy spokesperson Capt. Geronimo Malabanan said the armed men who were on a twin-engine speedboat were led by an ASG commander identified only as Lajib.

"We have received reports from the field that the group were Abu Sayyaf members and their leader was a certain Lajib," Malabanan told reporters, adding that they received the information from residents of the seaside communities near the scene of the abduction.

Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita said the men's identities weren't clear but they reportedly spoke Tausug, one of the southern Philippine languages used by members of the ASG, according to the Associated Press.

No pursuit

Officials differed about whether the attack occurred in Malaysian or Philippine waters, but Malaysia's Defense Minister Najib Razak said Monday his government's forces couldn't pursue the raiders because they couldn't enter foreign territory without permission.

Ermita said Philippine authorities were coordinating with Malaysia.

"They're either bandits or armed criminals plying the area," Malaysian Ambassador to the Philippines Mohamed Taufik said. "It's not wrong to assume the Abu Sayyaf. It's highly possible."

Malabanan said Philippine Navy, Marines and Air Force vessels were scouring the waters off Cagayan de Tawi-Tawi near the Malaysian border in search of the raiders.

"Our analysis is that there is a possibility they are somewhere in Cagayan de Tawi-Tawi," he said.

The three victims were identified as Indonesian Sam Walter Pel and Malaysians Wong Sien Nung and Toh Chien Tieng.

Royal Navy

The Royal Malaysian Navy has joined the search after canceling a naval exercise in the area of the abduction.

Unidentified armed men boarded the Malaysian tugboat, the Ocean 2, on April 11 at around 7 p.m. in the vicinity of Linkian Island, Sabah, Malaysia.

The abductors fled in the direction of Baguan Island, Tawi-Tawi, leaving behind the seven other crew members who reported the incident to Malaysian authorities.

Commodore George Uy, commander of Naval Forces Western Mindanao, said they were able to recover the tugboat which had been pulling a barge loaded with pebbles. *With Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao; AP*

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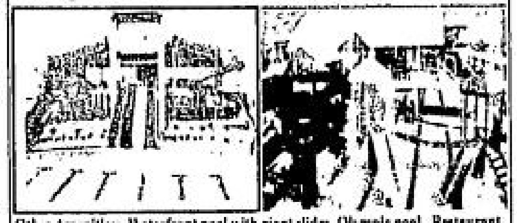

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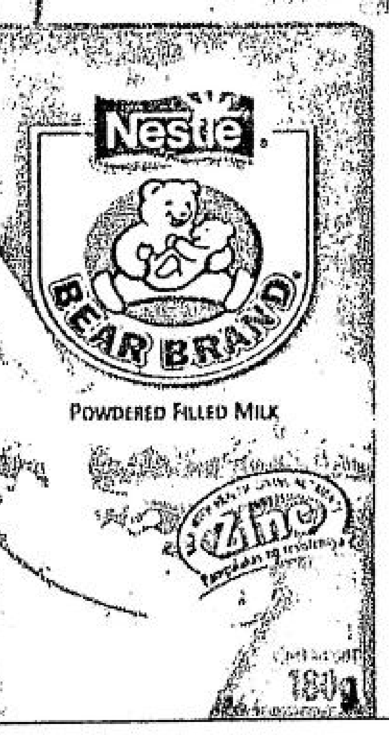

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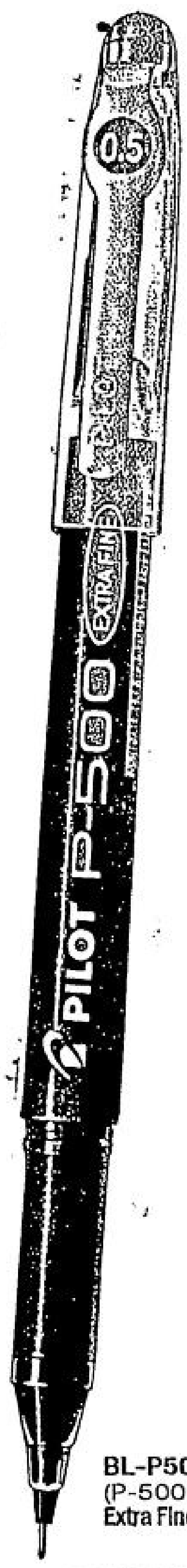

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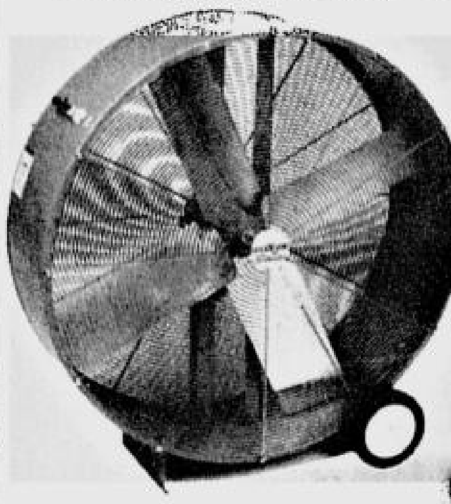

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BY R. B. VERA

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, April 14, 2004
Octave of Easter

1st Reading: Acts 3:1-10
Gospel: Lk 24:13-35

Two disciples of Jesus were going to Emmaus, a village seven miles from Jerusalem, and they talked about what had happened. While they were talking and wondering, Jesus came up and walked with them, but their eyes were held and they did not recognize him.

He asked, "What is this you are talking about?" The two stood still, looking sad. Then one named Cleophas answered, "Why, it seems you are the only traveler in Jerusalem who doesn't know what has happened there these past few days." And he asked, "What is it?"

They replied, "It is about Jesus of Nazareth. He was a prophet, you know, mighty in word and deed before God and the people. But the chief priests and our rulers sentenced him to death. They handed him over to be crucified. We had hoped that he would redeem Israel.

"It is now the third day since all this took place. It is true that some women of our group have disturbed us. When they went to the tomb at dawn, they did not find his body; they came to tell us that they had seen a vision of angels who told them that Jesus was alive. Some friends of our group went to the tomb and found everything just as the women had said, but they did not see him."

He said to them, "How dull you are, how slow of understanding! You fail to believe the message of the prophets. Is it not written that the Christ should suffer all this and then enter his glory?" Then starting with Moses and going through the prophets, he explained to them everything in the Scripture concerning himself.

As they drew near the village they were heading for, Jesus made as if to go farther. But they prevailed upon him, "Stay with us, for night comes quickly. The day is now almost over." So he went in to stay with them. When they were at table, he took the bread, said a blessing, broke it and gave each a piece.

Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; but he vanished out of their sight. And they said to each other, "Were not our hearts filled with ardent yearning when he was talking to us on the road and explaining the Scriptures?"

They immediately set out and returned to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and their companions gathered together. They were greeted by these words: "Yes, it is true, the Lord is risen! He has appeared to Simon!" Then the two told what had happened on the road and how Jesus made himself known when he broke bread with them.

Commentary

Two men with heavy hearts, full of regrets and foreboding, going in the wrong direction ... Jesus walks beside them and talks with them but they are unable to recognize him. This story is an image of the life of the Church.

"Why are you looking for him among the dead?" said the angels to the women at his tomb. Seek him among the living! It was the same instruction at the Ascension, "People of Galilee, why are you standing here looking into the sky?" (Acts 1:11). Your life is unfolding in the present, not in the past; among the living, not among the dead; on the ground, not in the sky. Not in the tomb, not in the sky, but here on the ground; not in the past, not in future, but in the present.

About five years later, Paul, the persecutor of Christians, was to have his strange experience. On the road to Damascus he was thrown to the ground and he heard a voice, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? I am Jesus whom you are persecuting" (Acts 9:4,5). Jesus, then, is still beside his followers. He is only dimly recognized and by few. "You were with me," wrote St. Augustine some centuries later, "but I was not with you" (Confessions, X, 27). But we are able to recognize him in the breaking of bread.

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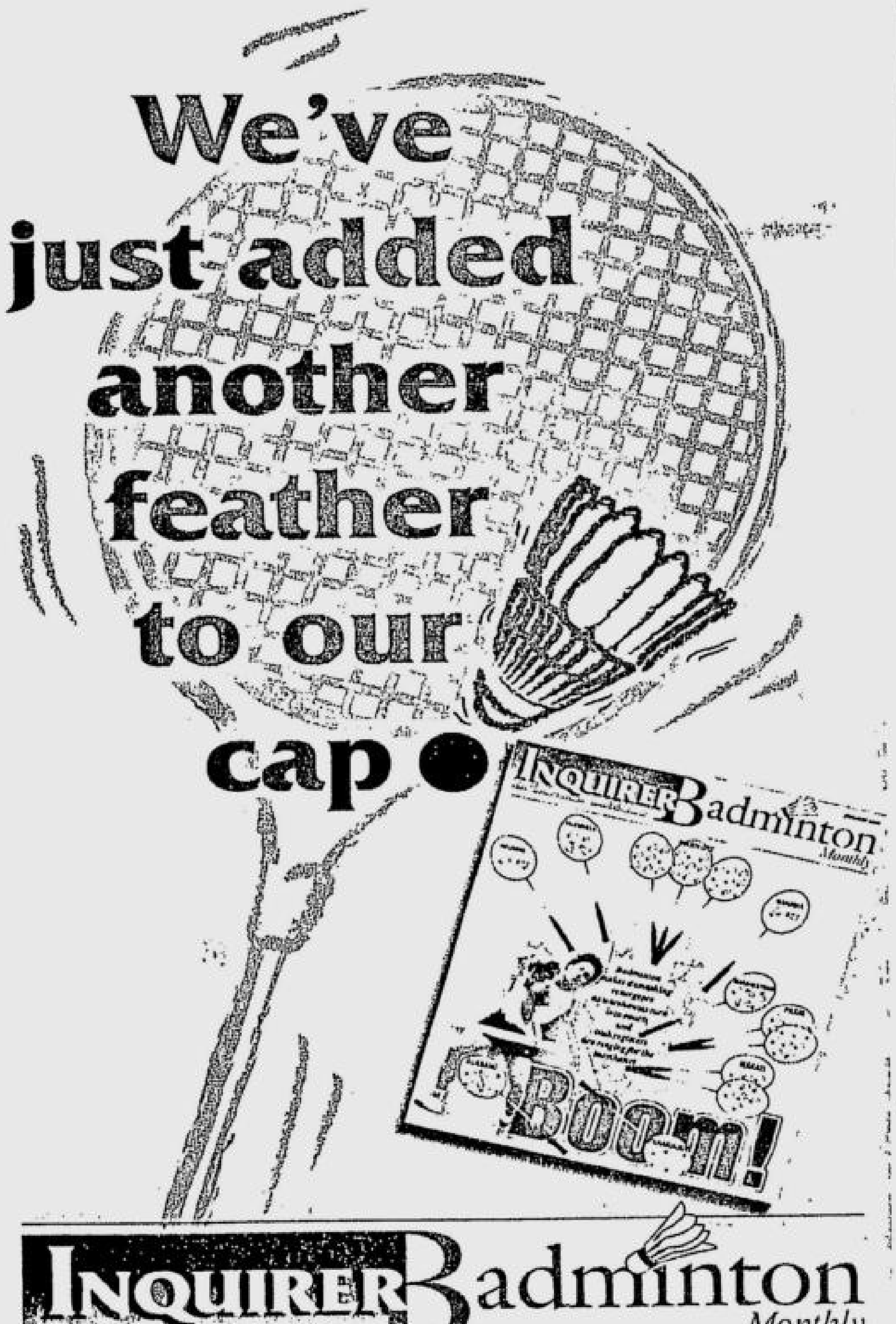
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BAYOT

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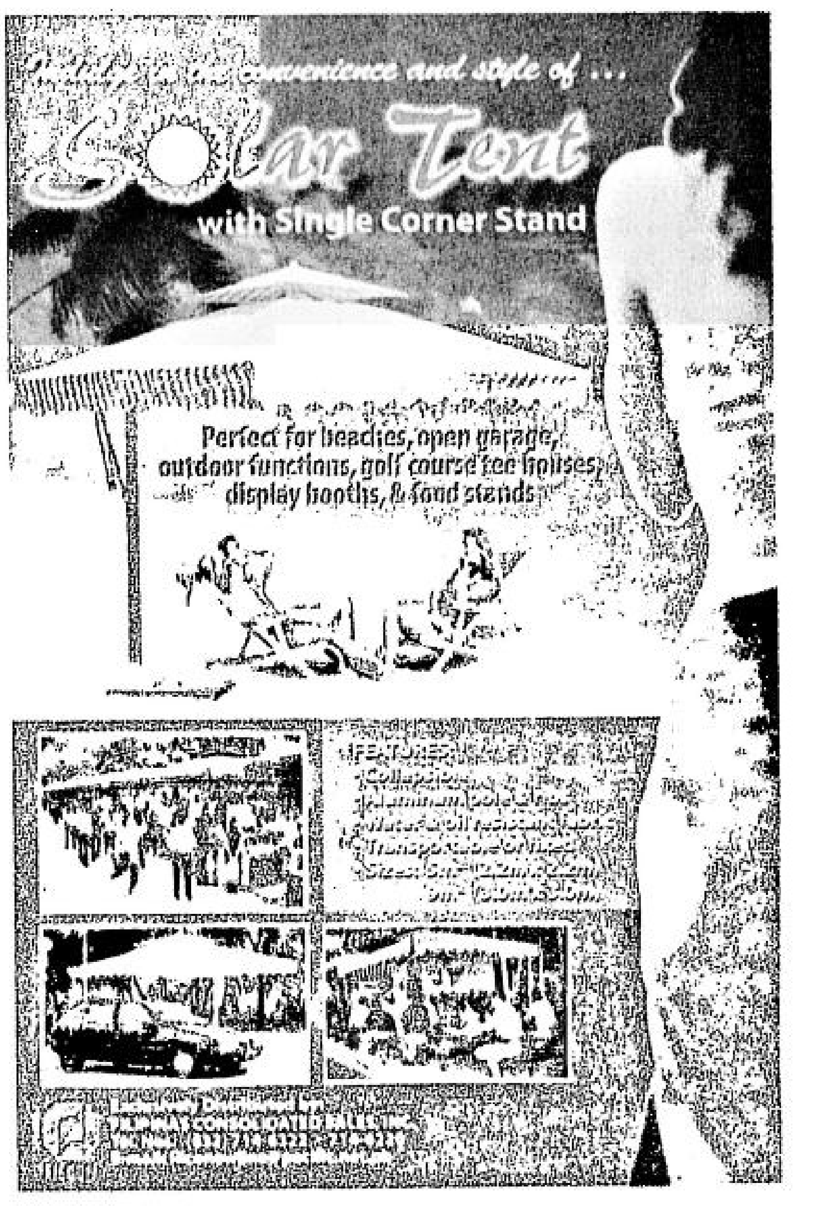
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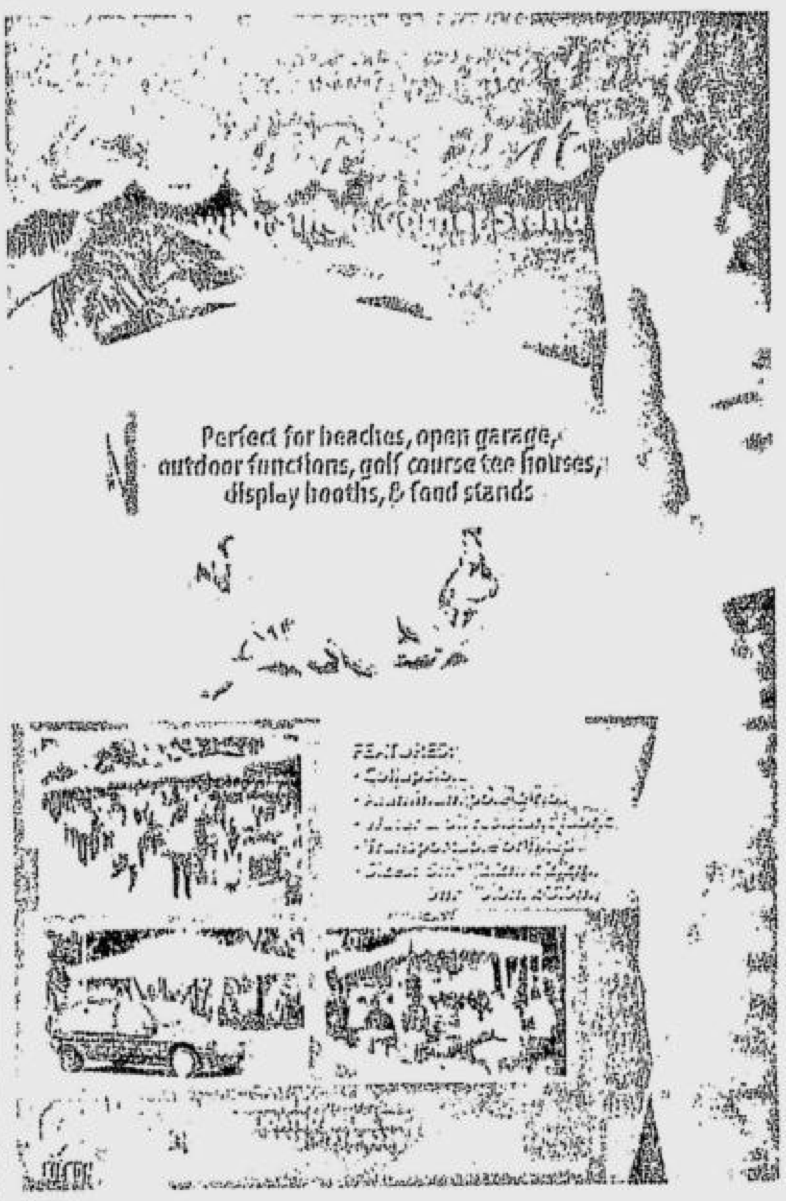

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FPJ slams Ping, defends Angara

From page A1

LADY'S choice: Imelda Marcos makes no bones about her presidential preference during Poe's campaign in Batac, Ilocos Norte, on Tuesday.

EDWIN BACASMAS

April 4, showed Ms Macapagal with 34 percent and Poe with 31 percent. The President had trailed by nine points in an earlier survey this year.

A recent Social Weather Stations survey showed that a Lacson withdrawal would give Poe a "commanding" lead over Ms Macapagal.

Merge or face defeat

"The opposition will be forced to merge or face defeat," said political analyst Earl Parreño.

Opposition re-electionist Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said it was likely that Lacson would give way to Poe because the former continued to trail in the surveys.

"From all practical considerations, the situation demands that if anyone should withdraw, it should be Lacson," Pimentel said in a statement issued by the Poe-led Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino.

Pimentel said Lacson would give way to Poe because of the latter's training as a soldier.

"Lacson knows when to fight and when to retreat," he said. "At this point, he can gauge from the surveys and he can personally see that he no longer has a chance."

Pimentel asked Lacson not to impose any conditions for the unification of the opposition.

"That [taking Angara out of KNP] isn't going to happen," Pimentel said in an interview. "If Mr. Lacson puts that as a condition, it can simply mean that the unification talks will not succeed."

Pimentel also said that Poe was prepared to finish the campaign with or without a withdrawal by Lacson from the race.

"It [Lacson withdrawal] will not be a critical factor [for a Poe victory]," Pimentel said. "Fernando Poe Jr. will win regardless of whether or not there will be a unification."

Politics is addition

KNP senatorial candidate Francisco Tatad said that following the dictum that politics is addition, "every guy has something to contribute."

"Cutting out individuals who had been there from the very start, it seems to me, is out of the question," Tatad said.

Tatad was referring to Angara's key role in shepherding the opposition to support Poe even before the actor had yet to declare his presidential intentions.

In Pototan, Iloilo, senatorial candidate Carlos Padilla reiterated Lacson's call. Padilla, the lone senatorial candidate of Lacson, urged Angara to take a leave from politics for the unification of opposition forces to get under way.

"My advice to Angara is to banish himself either to Batanes or to Tawi-tawi and stay there until election time," Padilla told reporters in the middle of his and Lacson's campaign sorties in Iloilo.

"We will invite him come inauguration day. He can be assured of that," Padilla said.

Padilla, a stalwart of the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino, said that every organization that Angara had led suffered problems, including the recent split in the LDP.

'Childish'

One faction, led by LDP secretary general Makati Rep. Agapito Aquino, pushed for the presidential bid of party member Lacson. The other, led by Angara who forged an alliance with other opposition parties, drafted Poe.

"If he is that mature, why did every organization that he led suffer problems when he was at the helm?" Padilla said after Angara described the Lacson camp's call for his ouster from the KNP as "childish."

"The LDP has split because of Angara. Now, the KNP has split because of Angara," Padilla said, referring to the reported reorganization caused by the alleged dissension within the KNP coalition. *With a report from Christine O. Avendaño*

Running mate says Roco agonized over 3 options

From page A1

dard-bearer faced were:

- Hide from the public the physical pain wrenching him and plod on with his campaign for the May 10 presidential election.
- Fly immediately to the United States at the risk of crippling his presidential bid.
- And the third and most dramatic option: withdraw from the race.

Roco's vice presidential candidate Herminio Aquino recounted to the INQUIRER how the former education secretary wrestled over the three options during the Holy Week break—his week of agony, as it were.

Roco, according to Aquino, weighed his choices carefully because he believed that the country "needed a choice" at the polls.

He quoted Roco as saying at one stage: "We will be there. The Filipinos must wake up. The Filipinos must fight, and we will fight on."

"Unknown to us, he has been in pain all the time," said Aquino, referring to Roco's chronic back pains which eventually forced the former senator to decide to fly to the United States for treatment.

ERIK ARAZAS

IN PAIN the past two weeks, Roco left last night for an undisclosed hospital in Texas.

Money dangled

At some point—it was not exactly clear when—Aquino claimed the Roco camp even received feelers from one of the contending parties for Roco to withdraw outright from the race, in exchange for this or that favor.

One offer supposedly involved an amount in nine figures which could have been used by the rest of the Alyansa candidates to finance their own campaigns if Roco pulled out.

The INQUIRER could not verify the claim independently.

Roco never entertained the offer, Aquino said.

He said Roco's announcement that he would leave for the US was not planned.

"It's all really because of the circumstances," Aquino said. "He told me about two weeks ago that he was having this pain. I thought it would go away in a matter of days. But I noticed that he was getting cranky at times. It was really painful. So Roco was looking forward to the Holy Week break to rest."

Aquino, who shared the same vehicle with Roco in most of their campaign sorties, thought the Holy Week break would do his man good.

"But when I saw him on Sunday, his condition had not improved at all."

In the end, it was Roco's "personal decision" to seek treatment before his condition worsened.

Best option

"We agonized over several options. I think this is the best option," said Aquino, who added that the US trip would not only allow the former senator to set the proper treatment but also give him much-needed rest.

He said the first option of staying and seeking treatment after the elections was risky.

"There's physical danger," said Aquino. "Anything can happen to him while campaigning. That is not a good option. I saw him getting worse and worse every day. If he becomes ineffective as the campaign goes on, the whole group will be dragged down. We can't keep his condition from the public too long."

The second option, backing out of the race, was also ruled out.

"Withdrawing was a very drastic option that we didn't [endorse]," he said. "In the first place, nobody will carry on the fight. It's just like we gave up the fight. We will be orphaned. So this option was just stated but was not really given much thought."

Roco listened to the views of his senatorial candidates before he made his move, senatorial candidate Frank Chavez said.

"He consulted us. He got everybody's views," Chavez said.

"Under the circumstances, it is the best option," he added, referring to the US trip.

Aborted 'deal'

An administration source said he learned from two other sources that talks were also held recently between two key allies of Roco and Sen. Panfilo Lacson on a "possible unification" of their two camps.

The source said that former Gov. Lito Osmeña, an ally of Roco's, talked to Lito Banayo, Lacson's political strategist, about this before the Holy Week.

"There were efforts to open communication lines between them," the source said.

But he said no agreement was reached on who, between Roco and Lacson, would give way.

"My information is Ping's group wanted Raul to give way," the source said.

Under the proposed deal, an INQUIRER informant said, Roco would slide down to become the top senatorial candidate of Lacson, taking with him Alyansa's entire senatorial slate, which would then run under the Lacson banner.

The negotiators supposedly had accepted such a deal in principle but Roco dashed it at the last minute.

In a huff

Osmeña reportedly talked to Roco about the deal during the Lenten break in Tagbilaran, Bohol.

At that meeting, the former governor was seen leaving in a huff.

"Don't press me, don't press me," Roco was overheard telling Osmeña.

Sen. Francis Pangilinan said the Liberal Party would "continue to try to broker unity talks" between Roco and Ms Macapagal "in the hope that we are able to unite and ensure the prevention of a KNP victory."

But LP chair and Senate President Franklin Drilon said there were no such talks going on.

Drilon had earlier disclosed that the LP tried to broker unity talks between the President and Roco's camp in December but nothing came of it.

'Da King' downplays GMA lead

From page A1

and local elections.

Asked if the KNP was hard-pressed for funds, Poe said: "Not really. We're continuing to work. We need funding. We need support."

The survey, conducted by Pulse Asia from March 27 to April 4, found that 34 percent of the voters would choose Ms Macapagal while 31 percent would go for Poe.

Former Education Secretary Raul Roco was third with 12 percent while Sen. Panfilo Lacson was fourth with 10 percent. Bro. Edddie Villanueva was last with 3 percent.

Disbelief

He expressed disbelief at the latest survey results.

Lacson said that both the Social Weather Stations and Pulse Asia "keep on pinning me down in the vicinity of 10; 11 (and) 12 percent which I don't believe absolutely."

He said that if the Pulse Asia survey were to be believed he was only good for three million votes.

"That's not only improbable but also impossible. Judging by the reception we are getting, I'm sure I'm worth more than three million votes," Lacson said.

He said he would resign as senator if he would get only two to three million votes. "I'm not going to finish my term. Goodbye, public service," Lacson told reporters covering his campaign sortie in Iloilo yesterday.

Despite consistently placing fourth, Lacson said he believed he would win. "This is the reason why we continue with the rigors of campaigning. If a candidate doesn't believe that he is going to win, then he has no business campaigning," he said.

"But that's only half of the story. A candidate should also stand for principles," he added.

Noli's diminishing lead

KNP senatorial candidate Ernesto Herrera was upbeat over the Pulse Asia survey, saying it showed that Sen. Loren Legarda, Poe's running mate, was chipping away at the lead of Sen. Noli de Castro, Ms Macapagal's vice presidential bet.

Herrera noted that Legarda was now 14 points behind De Castro, who garnered 49 percent.

"In Pulse Asia's survey early March, Noli de Castro was 21 points ahead of Loren," Herrera said.

Herrera said that De Castro's diminishing lead could be the reason the De Castro camp had come up with claims that the broadcaster was facing death threats.

"It's a cheap political gimmick designed to win sympathy votes," Herrera said.

In a separate interview, KNP senatorial candidate Francisco Tatad said the survey results for Ms Macapagal and Poe were not consistent with the warm welcome the KNP national candidates were getting from people during their sorties.

KNP senatorial candidate Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said that it was Ms Macapagal who should be worried about the survey results.

Pimentel said the slim lead of the President indicated that she herself was having a difficult time winning over the electorate.

KNP senatorial candidate Jamby Madrigal was straight to the point: "I cannot believe in surveys."

Local leaders fully mobilized

Two administration congressmen have an explanation for the lead of Ms Macapagal over Poe: local candidates from the administration's K-4 coalition.

Representatives Prospero Pichay (Surigao del Sur), Prospero Nograles (Davao City) and Exequiel Javier (Antique) said the bandwagon started with local leaders moving in the countryside with the start of the local campaign to ensure the President's victory.

Nograles said he expected the President to pull further away in the last four weeks of the campaign. "Our local leaders are now fully mobilized, bringing with them a common goal to carry the President to a resounding victory," he said.

He said the opposition was losing steam. "The predicted tsunami was all hype and hot air," he said.

Javier said the President's ability to elaborate on her platform of government also contributed to her lead in the Pulse Asia survey.

"With only a few days before the polls, people are disappointed that Poe still fails to expound on his platform and prove he has the mind, not only the heart, to lead the nation," Javier said.

Javier said the local campaign boosted the President's rating as coalition candidates from Lakas, Nationalist People's Coalition, Liberal Party and Partido Demokratiko Sosyalista ng Pilipinas were dominating the local contests.

Black propaganda

Pichay said that because the President was leading in the surveys, Poe's campaign handlers were shifting to black propaganda to discredit the administration.

More disturbing, he said, were the efforts to project a "No Election" scenario and to discredit the Commission on Elections, SWS and Pulse Asia.

Exasperated by the opposition's repeated warnings of massive fraud by the administration in the May elections, Ms Macapagal's campaign spokesperson Michael Defensor said the President's rivals should saturate polling booths and the canvassing with their own watchers to erase their fears of cheating.

No more envelopes for Meralco power bills

From page A1

back with spit, er, spite?

These choices will cease to be starting this month, because the Manila Electric Co. has decided to dispense with the formality altogether and just cut to the chase.

Henceforth, residential and general service (RGS) subscribers will receive naked billing sheets, a move that would save the Lopez-led giant power distributor P2.3 million monthly.

That's how much the envelopes cost, according to Elpi Cuna, Meralco vice president for corporate communications.

Practical thing to do

"It's a savings thing," Cuna said in a phone interview yesterday. "We need all the money we can get. People just throw away these envelopes anyway, so we thought we might as well just do away with them."

During the company's annual stockholders meeting last year, Cuna recounted, one shareholder suggested that doing away with the envelopes might translate to much-needed cash. He said management agreed after some deliberation.

"We figured it was the practical thing to do," Cuna explained. "Those envelopes are quite expensive (because) they're not just plain white envelopes; they have windows that show the subscriber's name and billing address."

The company last year posted a net income of P907 million, bouncing back from a P2.01-billion deficit the year before. This net loss was subsequently restated to P28.18 billion to reflect the Supreme Court's decision that required Meralco to give back to its customers almost P30 billion in income tax charges passed on to them from February 1994 to April 2003.

Belt-tightening

Meralco's rate hike of 12 centavos per kilowatt hour, previously approved by the Energy Regulatory Commission, was also blocked by the high tribunal. This resulted in belt-tightening measures for the company, including shelving around 42 expansion projects.

So that customers would not be taken by surprise, according to Cuna, this month's billing statements would include a notice in which the company explains the absence of envelopes.

But "surprise" being no longer among the reactions elicited by electric bills as much as rage or anxiety, Meralco could have taken it one step further for their long-complaining clients by explaining in detail how the move would benefit them, if at all.

Notice

Instead the notice would merely read: "As part of our thrust to bring you the comfort of electric service, we in Meralco are continually looking for ways to manage our costs. Beginning with April 2004 bills for residential and general service customers, we will be implementing a cost-saving measure: you will be receiving your electric bills without envelopes. Rest assured that this change will not affect the quality of service that we in Meralco are committed to provide you."

The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Bush defends crackdown vs Iraqi guerrillas

CRAWFORD, Texas/Fallujah, Iraq—US President George W. Bush said the US military's crackdown against Sunni and Shiite Muslim guerrillas is vital for a planned handover of power to Iraqis on June 30.

But on Monday the fragile security situation in many parts of Iraq was underlined by the reported kidnapping of 11 Russians in Baghdad—the latest in a spate of guerrilla abductions that has snared civilians from at least a dozen countries.

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US-led forces, who have been struggling for months to crush a Sunni insurgency in central Iraq, now face a Shiite revolt led by the radical cleric Moqtada al-Sadr in the south.

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Al Jazeera, citing an unnamed Russian source, reported the 11 Russians were kidnapped in Baghdad after a shoot-out between their Iraqi guards and the abductors. *Reuters*

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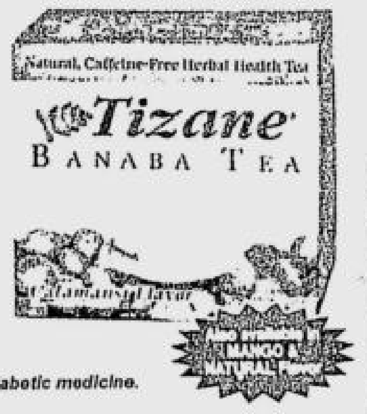

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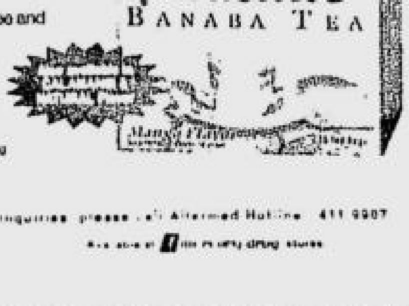

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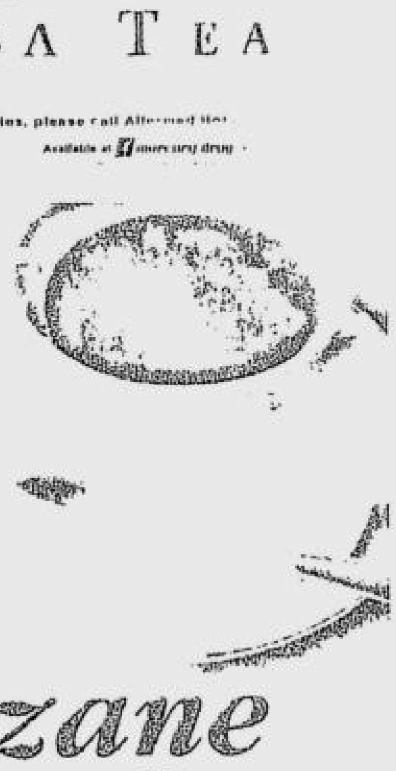

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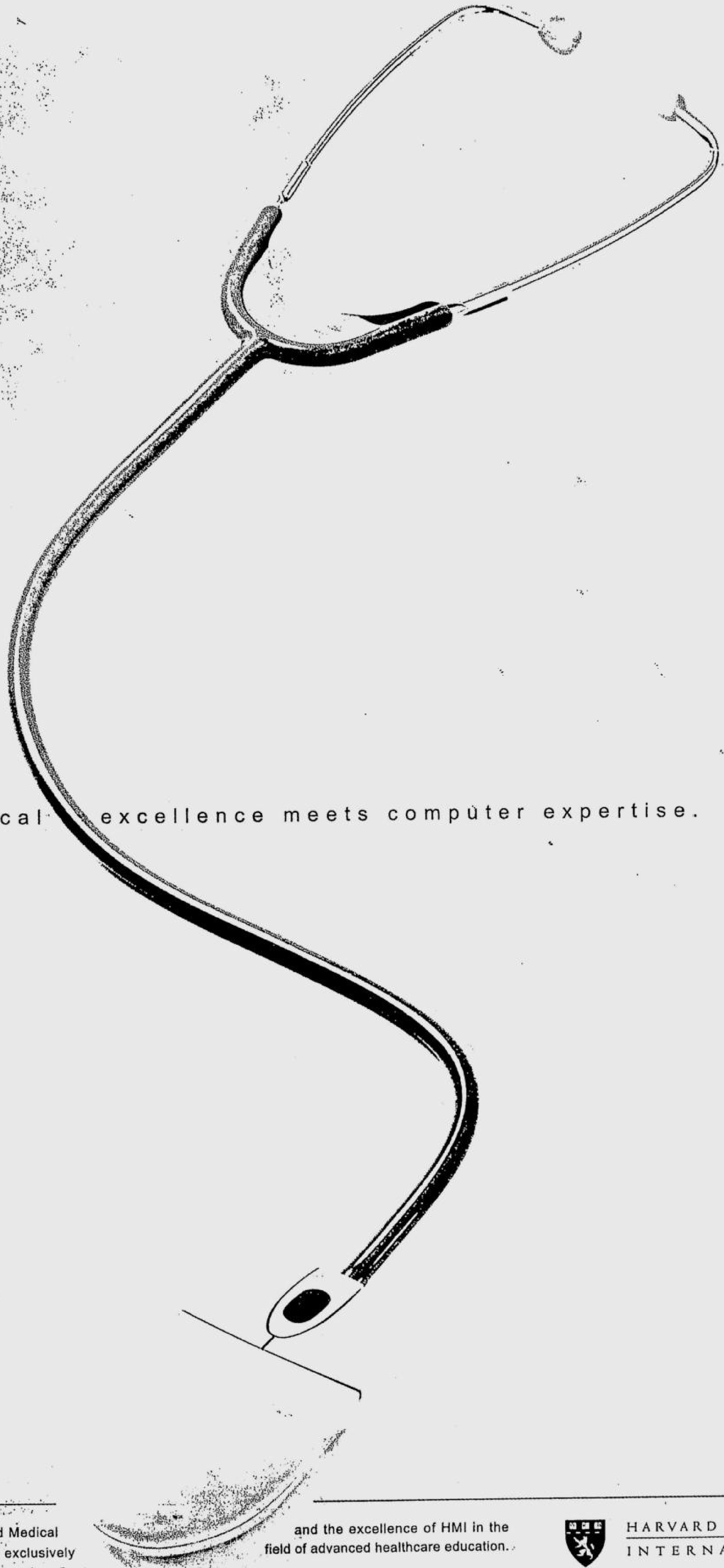

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3 more Moroccans nabbed over Madrid train blasts

MADRID—Spain has provisionally charged another Moroccan national and arrested two others in connection with last month's Madrid train bombings, judicial sources said on Monday.

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Megawati seen losing election, says opinion poll

JAKARTA—Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri has little chance of reelection this year if she goes head-to-head against a respected minister who quit her Cabinet last month, a leading opinion poll showed on Tuesday.

The Indonesia Survey Institute poll showed all pairings involving Megawati and various vice presidential running mates would not beat former chief security minister Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono in a two-horse race.

A former general popular for his calm leadership, Yudhoyono has seized the frontrunner's mantle for the presidential race on July 5, when several pairs of candidates are expected to square off. Should no pair win more than 50 percent in the first round, a run-off between the top two will be held in September.

The poll is further evidence that Megawati is fighting for her political life following legislative elections last week that show her party losing its dominance in parliament to Golkar, the former party of ousted autocrat Suharto. "Any presidential ticket with Yudhoyono on top outshines Megawati...

This finding contests the view that the presidential race will follow along party lines," said Muhammad Qodari, the institute's research director.

With more than half the parliamentary votes counted, Golkar leads with 20.73 percent to Megawati's Indonesia Democratic Party-Struggle (PDI-P) with 19.95 percent. That gap could widen as more votes are counted from outlying regions, where Golkar has a traditional foothold.

Yudhoyono is the candidate for the newly established Democrat Party. It so far has 7.5 percent of the vote and is running fifth among the 24 parties competing—a respectable showing for a new party.

The opinion poll involved 2,760 respondents nationwide and was conducted in the weeks before the parliamentary elections in Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim country. *Reuters*

Death toll in Russian mine explosion: 45

OSINNIKI, Russia—Rescue teams on Monday found the body of another coal miner in a Siberian pit shattered by a gas explosion, bringing the death toll to 45 with all hope abandoned for finding two remaining men alive.

The Emergencies Ministry said the body would be hoisted to the surface on Tuesday, which has been declared a day of mourning in the region.

Rescuers, often digging with their bare hands, fought round the clock to reach possible survivors after a powerful explosion tore through the Taizhina mine early on Saturday.

Sergei Kovalenko, of the ministry's local branch, had earlier told reporters there was no hope of finding alive any miners still unaccounted for.

In the nearby village of Visoky, residents made final preparations for 17 funerals due to take place on Tuesday.

Rescuers had pushed their way toward the trapped miners by both a direct route and a 5-km detour through a nearby mineshaft.

But they were unable to use machinery because of the risk of a fresh explosion and had to rely on the light from their headlamps as they tunneled through earth and rock.

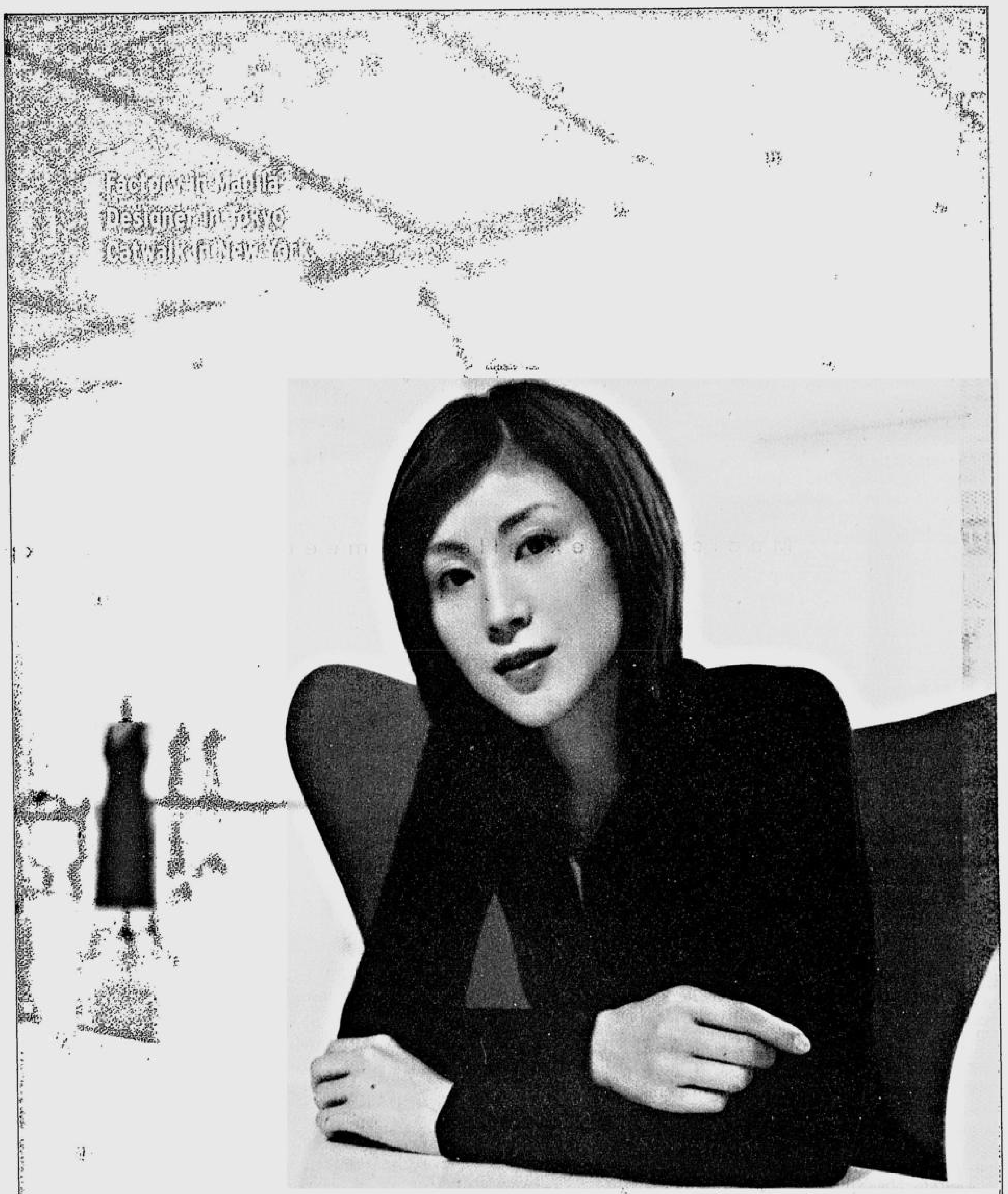
Several miners on the shift, carrying out underground repair work, scrambled out after the blast. Others were pulled free with serious burns.

The governor of the Kemerovo region, Aman Tuleyev, said investigation of the accident was being pursued, but he did not believe any safety rules had been infringed.

"There was no mining work going on and in the space of two hours the level of methane climbed to nine times the norm," Tuleyev said in comments broadcast on state television.

The region's Kuzbass coalfield has been the scene of many accidents in the past, but Izvestia newspaper said this was the worst there for seven years.

The Taizhina mine is a new shaft that had been open for about four years. *Reuters*



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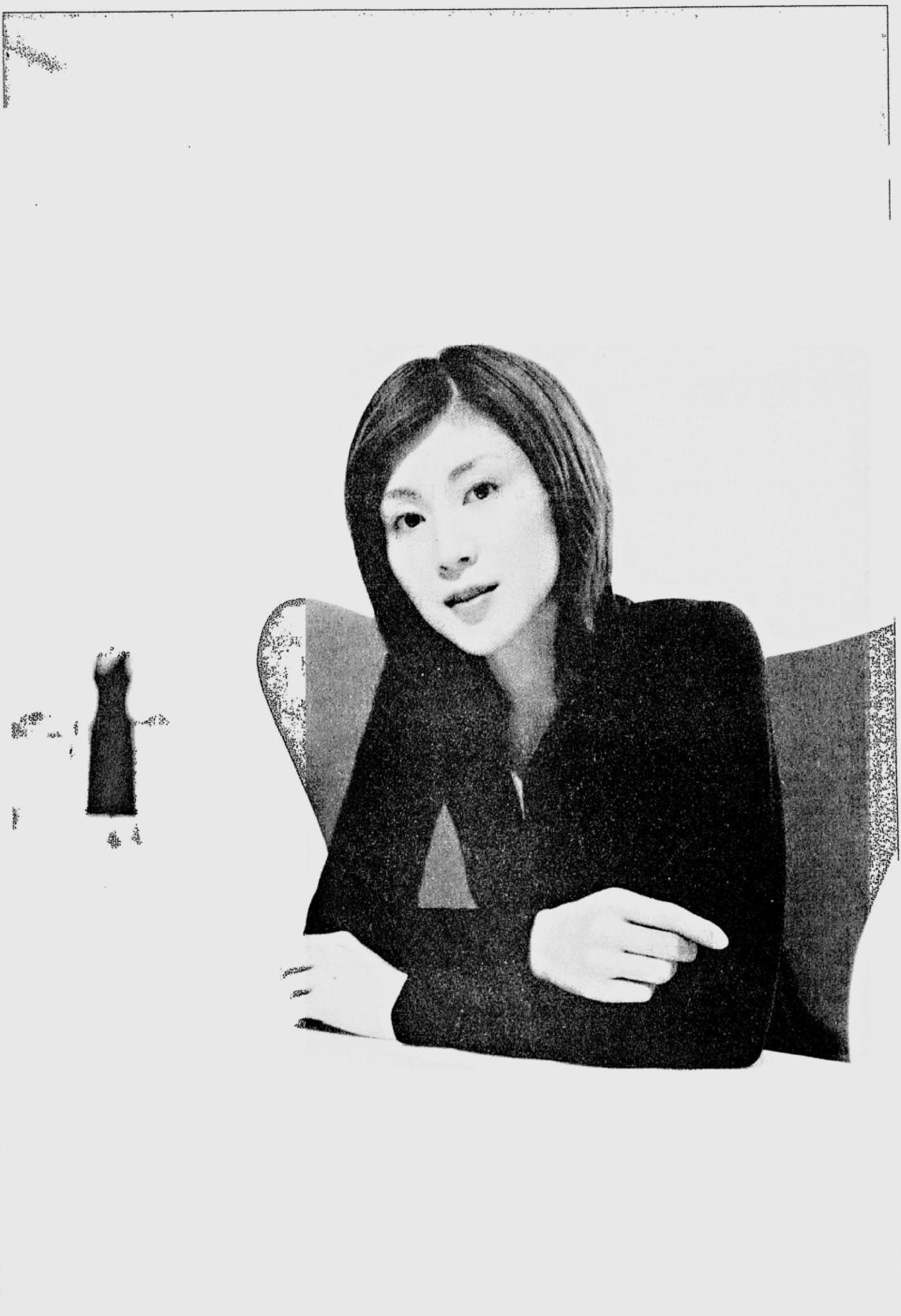

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OPINION

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Crushed hopes

EDITORIAL

FOR all intents and purposes, Raul Roco's quest for the presidency has come to an end. Yesterday he announced that due to an illness that could be debilitating, he was backing out of the campaign. Although he remains officially a candidate, the dreams of his Alliance of Hope are now crushed.

Roco in 1998 and in 2004 was heir to a tradition of reformist outsiders trying to break the iron grip that political machinery has held on our politics for generations. His candidacy was an attempt to inject middle-class values into a political system infected by the cynicism of the elite and the patronage-based expectations of the masses. Like Claro M. Recto, Manuel Manahan and Raul Manglapus before him, he seized the imagination of reformist members of the elite, of a large portion of the middle class, and a great segment of the youth. But before he could even begin to fight, the expectations of the many—that success requires money and machinery—had already defeated the chances of the few.

Supporters of Roco had hoped to prove that idealism requires no compromise, that competence needs no apology and that seeking excellence is its own reward. It is easy, at this point, to believe that what has been proven, instead, is that for the majority of Filipinos, idealism equals being naïve, that competence is irrelevant, and that the rules are not made to be broken in our political system.

This is not so. If there is a lesson to be learned, this early, from Roco's candidacy, it is that idealism remains a motivating factor for a significant portion of our voting population, and that even an unsuccessful bid for the presidency can have a tangible impact on our political system.

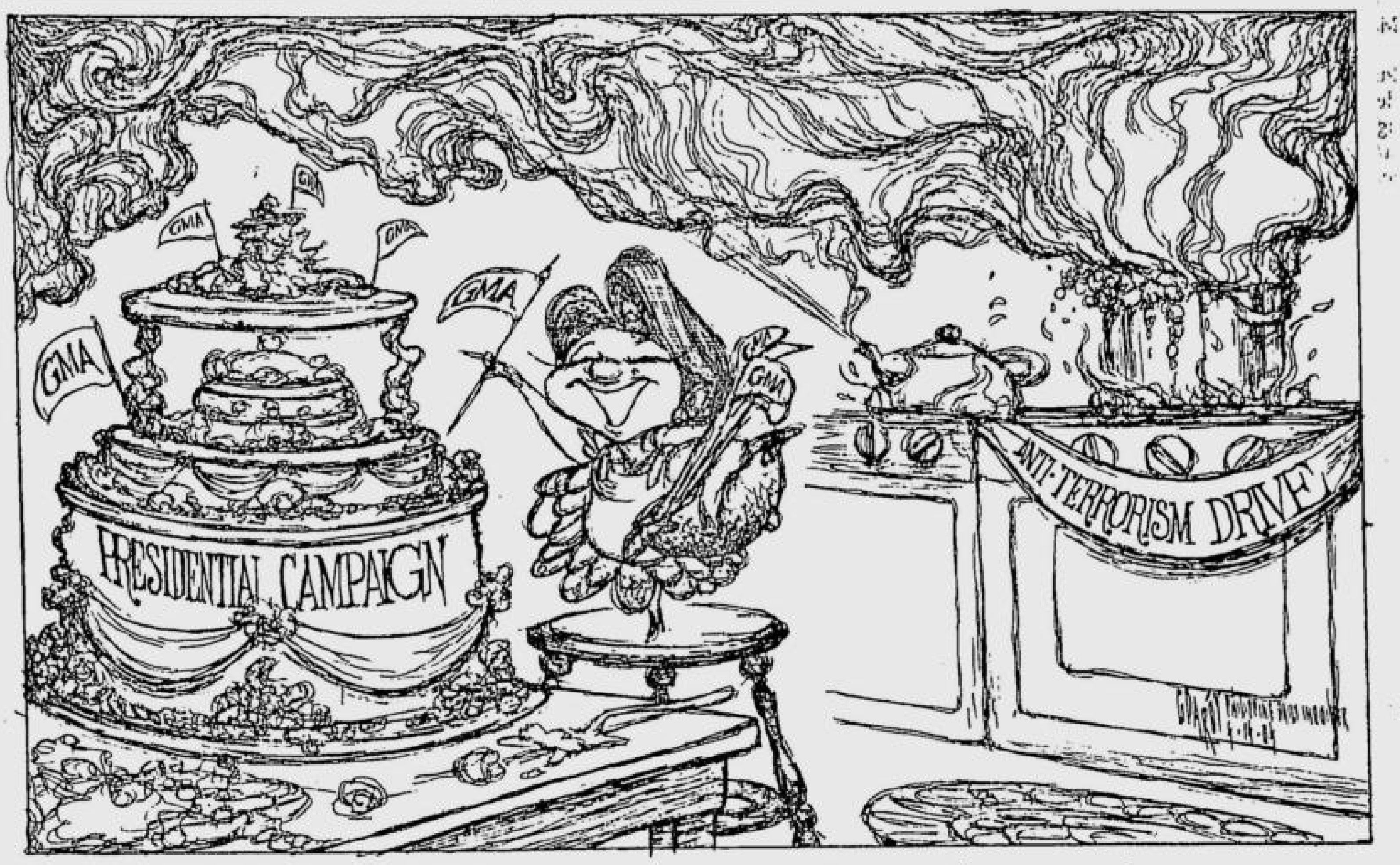
Roco's campaign was run with sophistication and a dedication to the issues. It was a yearning for a candidate who would decline to appeal to mere popularity, and who would, instead, offer something more substantial that brought the young and many talented professionals into the Roco camp in the first place. Having gotten on their feet and gone into the hustings, the youth and young professionals in the Roco campaign have learned many hard lessons. Almost certainly, the experience has given them a greater appreciation of the hard and harsh realities of Philippine life: how our society is thoroughly dominated, from top to bottom, by a cynical and ruthless political system.

Having seen the reality, those who are for Roco must surely realize their aspirations go beyond one leader's ambition to lead. Their candidate may have abandoned the field to save his life, but their own political lives have just begun.

Where does a leader's responsibilities to his followers lie in a case like this? Roco, who anchored his candidacy on integrity and honesty, cannot just go for a face-saving gesture now while leaving his followers hanging. Having put up a good fight, he may fear it would disappoint his followers for him to throw in the towel. Perhaps it would be so, if his candidacy were only about Raul Roco and nothing else; if his candidacy were only about his ambition, then it might be preferable to go down to defeat in absentia.

Roco owes it to his supporters to do them one final service: to take the last step of formally putting an end to his candidacy altogether. Having declared himself morally and intellectually fit for office, he must be honest enough to admit now that his health crisis makes him physically unfit for the presidency. There is no shame in admitting this; but there is some mental dishonesty involved in saying he is abandoning the campaign, but remaining a candidate. One who is not fit to withstand the rigors of the campaign cannot be expected to handle ably the more taxing demands of the presidency.

The presidential campaign is not just about who will win on May 10, but rather about the direction this country will take over the next six years. Roco's supporters are now faced with a tough choice: whether or not, having gone this far, they will vote for him out of loyalty and as a form of protest, or turn around and vote for someone else who is still firmly in the race. We do not know what the individual Roco supporters will choose to do. We do know, that there remains a gigantic opportunity for Roco and his followers to seize. And that is, to keep themselves organized in order to play an important role in the political events that lie ahead.



The Maynilad-MWSS deal (Part 2)

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

7. IF the controversial Maynilad-MWSS agreement was not a "midnight deal," was it a "sweetheart deal," meaning, is it grossly advantageous to the Lopez family?

Under the proposed agreement, the $800-million investment that the Lopezes placed in Maynilad will be wiped out. They will also lose their 60 percent control of Maynilad. They will have nothing to do at all with the New Maynilad. They will not receive a single red cent from the transaction. Instead they will suffer write-offs totaling P3.8 billion.

To be sure, MWSS will be able to withdraw only $50 million of the $120-million performance bond, thus saving $70 million. But even assuming that the MWSS can withdraw the entire $120-million performance bond, that will only result in a substitution of creditors as far as Maynilad is concerned—from the MWSS to the banks that issued the bond.

The alternative to the agreement is the Maynilad rehabilitation plan of November 2003 wherein the Lopezes and Ondeo (the French partner) will retain full ownership of Maynilad. Also, the MWSS will be barred from drawing on the $120-million performance bond, and Maynilad will be allowed to pay its outstanding "Concession Fee" payments amounting to P7.1 billion over a nine-year period.

Is the proposed agreement a "sweetheart deal" or not? You be the judge.

8. There are those who say that the agreement will transfer Maynilad's debts from the Lopezes to the government. Is this true? No.

No debt that rightfully belongs to the Lopezes or Benpres will be transferred to the government. On the contrary, government will receive cash paid out of the performance bond which will effectively update all "Concession Fee" payments.

Will the consumers and government bear the losses caused by the bad business judgment of the Lopezes? Again, the answer is No. The Lopezes are bearing their losses to the tune of P3.2 billion in equity investment and another P629 million in advances to Maynilad, which will all be written off under the agreement.

9. There are also those who say that the agreement will preempt the Supreme Court from deciding a case earlier brought to it and to prevent the collapse of the Lopez business empire. Are these allegations true?

Once more, the answer is "No." Benpres has been negotiating for debt restructuring since June 2002 and the full amount of Benpres-guaranteed Maynilad debt, including the $120-million performance bond, has always been a part of these discussions. Maynilad, though, remains liable to the performance bond creditors for any amount withdrawn.

10. There are also allegations that Maynilad overcharged its customers through the collection of the "Foreign Currency Differential Adjustment" (FCDA) and the "Automatic Extraordinary Price Adjustment" (AEPA). True or false?

False. In truth, the MWSS Regulatory Office allowed Maynilad in October 2002 to raise rates to P26.75 per cubic meter (from P13.92 per cubic meter) to be implemented beginning January 2003. Maynilad did not implement this because it was already under arbitration. Maynilad merely continued collecting the FCDA and AEPA which together will be even less than what the MWSS authorized Maynilad to collect. Instead of overcharging, Maynilad was, in effect, undercharging.

11. Did Maynilad mismanage the West Zone concession, thus resulting in the huge losses?

The answer to that comes directly from a Maynilad handout. The figures also come from it, which are difficult to verify.

Despite the financial difficulties, so Maynilad says, it was able to pay $200 million of the $800 million foreign debts (or concession fees) which Maynilad assumed from the MWSS at privatization; increased treated water production from 1,600 million liters a day in 1997 to 2,246 million liters a day as of December 2003 (however, less than a third of this production was billed and collected; the rest was lost through leaks and theft); added 194,098 household connections (74,246 in urban poor communities); and expanded water coverage in the West Zone from 63 percent in 1997 to 85 percent as of December 2003.

"We are not leaving a desolate and financially unsound company as the misinformed wish to believe," said Maynilad chair Oscar M. Lopez. "There was no mismanagement of the water utility."

But almost 70 percent of the water that Maynilad supplies is Non-Revenue Water, water that is lost; is that management's fault or not?

Maynilad attributes this to the fact that bid documents in 1996 identified only 2,500 kilometers of pipelines in the West Zone. When Maynilad took over, it discovered that there were actually 3,700 km of pipelines. Maynilad said it invested plenty of money to repair and upgrade the leaking pipes but that there were more of them than originally believed. So there remain a lot more leaking pipes and illegal connections still wasting water and losing a lot of money. But that shows another bad business judgment on the part of the Lopezes, who should have made a "due diligence" study of the pipelines before making the bid but didn't, a poor decision that punishes them.

12. Is the Maynilad-MWSS deal good or bad? Again, the answer comes from Maynilad.

"It is the best arrangement that can be worked out of a bad situation, allowing all parties to 'share the pain.'" Maynilad can pursue the rehabilitation plan in court, but that would mean a protracted legal process that could last for years. Meanwhile, water service would be compromised. Instead of waiting several years for the rehabilitation plan to take its course, Benpres decided it was better to compromise with government to ensure service continuity.

Endorsements

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

PROSPERO Pichay says Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales' statement last weekend was a clear warning for the faithful not to vote for Fernando Poe Jr. In his statement, Rosales said a vote for the popular candidate was not necessarily a responsible one. He went on to list the traits of candidates the faithful should value instead.

Well, Pichay is right to say Rosales has issued a tract against FPJ. FPJ remains the popular candidate, notwithstanding the surveys, as may be seen with the naked eye. His sorties take on the aspect of a religious ritual, dredging fanatical adulation with devotees lining up to touch his face with handkerchiefs. Jaime Cardinal Sin, Rosales' predecessor, also lashed out in more unmistakable terms at Joseph Estrada, FPJ's predecessor, warning of Erap's many personal vices, which Erap did not particularly bother to hide. To no avail. Which could only mean that the faithful are not particularly faithful during elections and prefer to worship false gods.

Pichay is right to say Rosales' statements are a tract against FPJ. But he is wrong to suggest it is an endorsement of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. That is so not merely because GMA is the most unpopular candidate, again notwithstanding the surveys, as may also be gleaned with the naked eye. I have yet to hear NGOs, who have been largely conscripted into her service, proclaim with any fervor they are for her. It is always that they have been driven into her arms because of FPJ, a specious argument in every respect.

At the very least, that is so because even if GMA is not popular, she has herself taken the show-biz route, abandoning it only when faced with a real movie star, and a cultural icon at that. That is obvious in the movie-star-type posters she used in the past and in her dogged appearances at the weddings and funerals of movie stars.

Quite apart from that, if show biz is anathema because it suggests superficiality and appearances, then PR is the same thing, which suggests both to an even greater degree. That is pretty much how GMA has governed, by PR, her accomplishments existing only in the mind rather than in the flesh, in the claim rather than in the deed. At no time in the past, as I wrote yesterday, has the economy been in greater shambles. And GMA is an economist. Or so too on paper: she is really just another entertainer, though she fails even more miserably there.

But more than this, you run through the list Rosales has put out, and the faithful will see in it a warning not just against FPJ but against GMA as well.

First: "Beyond belief in God, the candidate must actually fear God." Well, you fear God, you will think twice before telling the people you will not run but run anyway. A covenant with the people is a covenant with God, if you go by the principle of *Vox populi, vox Dei.* You do not fear God when you break his commandment that says, "Thou shalt not lie."

Second: "The candidate is a moral, honest and non-violent individual in his or her personal, official and public life." Ditto above for GMA's morality and honesty. As to non-violent, who was the one Filipino leader who embraced George W. Bush's "war against terror" and unleashed all the warmongers in this country, like Pichay, upon the populace, setting back human rights, libertarianism, peace and all the things civil society has been fighting for by several decades?

Three: The candidate "is one who serves through principles and not by popularity and propaganda." Again, ditto above for popularity (show-biz route) and propaganda (PR).

Four: The candidate has "a genuine love for the poor and not a created image of empathy for them." Well, according to both the UNDP and the World Bank, poverty has increased in this country. From Erap's time to GMA's time, our human development index has fallen, unemployment has risen, and the peso has plunged to the abyss. GMA's apparent concern for the poor is shown only in PhilHealth cards, which were released only during the campaign period and relentlessly advertised on TV, using the people's money, by Honeygirl de Leon. It is not FPJ (or Erap) alone who likes to create an image of empathizing with the poor.

Five: "She or he has a record on an honest pursuit of the common good.., and is not concerned only in the advantage of a select group of industry." Well, two Filipino presidents have so far been responsible for exposing this country's economy to ravage: Diosdado Macapagal and Gloria Macapagal. The first unleashed "decontrol" in the early 1960s, destroying the industries that had flourished during import-substitution, which made us second only to Japan in economic potential. The second unleashed "globalization" during the early 2000s, destroying pretty much everything in its path, chief of them agriculture, which has made us second only to Laos in abject misery. Like father, like daughter.

Six: "The candidate does not work in tandem with opportunist friends, crooks and drug-traffickers." One need only mention three names: Arthur Villaraza, Mike Arroyo (aka Jose Pidal), Bong Pineda.

Seven: "She or he openly declares opposition to drugs, wasteful values and practices." GMA's opposition to wasteful values and practices you see in the huge billboards, posters, and ubiquitous TV ads that show her grinning face, paid for by us. The poor may imagine they are not paying taxes anyway, but they do, whenever they watch a movie or buy cooking oil. If that is conserving resources, only GMA, an economist, knows it.

And finally: "The aspiring leader owns a vision that embraces the interest and needs of the people." Only one thing need be said here: George W. Bush.

You read through the list and you reach only one conclusion. Rosales is endorsing either Raul Roco or Eddie Villanueva.

Roco's break

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

RAUL Roco has taken a break from the presidential campaign, for medical treatment in the United States. Taken at this late stage with the elections only four weeks ahead, his leave is as good as a withdrawal. Roco's exit may just be the catalyst that could break the impasse between President Macapagal-Arroyo and Fernando Poe Jr.

The withdrawal came as a new opinion poll by Pulse Asia was released, showing that the President had taken a three-percentage point lead against Poe, with whom she had been locked in a statistical tie for two months, after Poe's early lead of nine points had melted.

The next question is, where will voters who intended to vote for Roco shift? Roco has not indicated whether he will endorse anyone. An endorsement is critical to a realignment.

Roco's withdrawal from the race also came as Poe's campaign was in disarray, plagued by continuing disunity in the opposition ranks and by financial shortfalls. Roco's exit is now expected to put pressure on the opposition coalition to forge unity with Sen. Panfilo Lacson who, like Roco, has been faring poorly in the surveys since the campaign started in early February. Opposition quarters realize the urgency of forging a Poe-Lacson coalition, believing that if Lacson does not make way for Poe, the anti-Macapagal votes would be split between them. Moreover, the cash-strapped Poe camp is lusting for the fat campaign chest of Lacson, who has been drawing contributions from the Chinese community, to re-ignite its faltering drive.

In its survey of March 21-29, the Social Weather Stations found the President and Poe locked in a statistical tie (32 percent for Poe and 31.4 percent for the President), and pointed out that the withdrawal of Roco and Lacson would decide the election outcome. In that survey, Roco was third with 15 percent, and Lacson, 11.2 percent. In case of a Roco withdrawal, the survey found that 5.6 percent among the 15 percent who said they would vote for Roco would switch to the President, while 4.3 percent would go to Poe. According to this calculation, Poe would gain marginally from a Roco withdrawal.

However, if Lacson withdrew, 5 percent of the 11.2 percent who said they would vote for him would switch to Poe, while only 1.4 percent would vote for the President. A Lacson withdrawal is expected to put Poe four percentage points ahead of the President.

The public will have to wait anxiously whether Roco will endorse Ms Macapagal or not. Both have a strong base in the middle classes. But a breakthrough from the stalemate appears to have been made, according to Pulse Asia's survey of March 27 to April 4. The survey found the President surging past Poe, with a three-point lead. She polled 34 percent, while Poe had 31 percent.

This is the first time since the February 2004 survey that the President has enjoyed a "statistically significant lead" over Poe. In the February survey, the President had 31.9 percent and Poe 31.7 percent.

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What the recent Pulse Asia survey, together with the previous surveys from February, presents is a clear picture: as time passes, the President's support has slowly been climbing, while that for Poe has either stagnated or has been eroded in such a strategic area as Metro Manila.

The poor poll showing of Roco, especially his decline in February and March, may have been responsible for his decision to quit. What is significant is whether Roco would endorse the President. It is considered unlikely that he would endorse Poe, as a large part of Roco's constituency comes from the middle classes, which are dismissive of Poe's qualifications for the presidency. Should Roco endorse her, it would be a bonus for the President.

It did not take long for the business community to express its preference after the release of Pulse Asia's latest survey. The peso rallied from its fall last March. The peso traded at 55.94 to the dollar on Tuesday after trading at 56.14 on Monday. The peso traded at 55 to the dollar two months ago after falling to a record 56.45 in late March, showing jitters over election uncertainties.

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The long Lenten holidays were used by the opposition not to hold a spiritual retreat but to review where its campaign has gone wrong and how and why it has lost momentum. In the process of reinvigoration, the opposition has discovered that it was not running a tight campaign. It has so many campaign managers and spokespersons, most of them contradicting one another and sending out mixed messages. But when the opposition stalwarts emerged from their long holiday, they ran smack right away into bad news: the poll surveys showing that the President had pulled away from Poe, albeit not decisively.

Critiquing the 'Passion'

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

AS I thought, I did finally get to see "The Passion of the Christ" over Holy Week. I'd been steeling myself for the reputedly heart-wrenching scenes of Jesus' pain and suffering. It didn't help that Jesus Christ was being portrayed by Jim Caviezel, a respected actor who hasn't quite made it to the Hollywood "A-list," maybe because, as one critic noted, he chooses roles not so much for their commercial potential but for the acting challenge they present. I'd been following his career discreetly, looking out for movies with his name in the credits, mainly because I'm fascinated by his eyes, with their look of pained innocence, as if he were asking the world how it could be so cruel to a nice guy like him.

Scenes of cruelty and stoic suffering, with an actor like Caviezel in them? I could feel the tears welling in my eyes even before I entered the theater. "I brought tissue for you, Ma," my daughter teased, "I expect you'll be sobbing before the first half is over."

Well, nyah-nyah, I didn't shed a tear. Although I did bring my hands over my eyes at one scene, just before the centurions were to pound the heavy nails into Jesus' palm. It wasn't pity that welled up in my chest, but something like revulsion and horror. True, we'd been warned about the blood and gore, and friends had already told me to brace myself for the "scourging at the pillar."

What I didn't expect was the way the camera lingered almost lovingly on Jesus' wounded back, the way the hooks on the whips snagged bits of flesh, on the way the camera swept across His body sprawled on the dirt like it was panning across a landscape. Did it have to dwell so fondly on his broken body?

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PROVOCATIVE is a word that's been used to describe the film.

Provocative for some because it evoked feelings of guilt and shared pain, some said, provoking, so newspaper reports went, a bee-line to the confessional.

My grade-school religion teachers told us it was our "sins" that made Jesus suffer so in His last moments as a human being. Over the years, I would imagine every bite I took of a hamburger on a Friday as one more whiplash on His naked back. Seeking to pound some guilt into us when she suspected us of cheating on tests, one teacher warned that every time we glanced surreptitiously at a seat mate's test paper, we added a pound or two to the "cross that Jesus had to bear."

Only much later would logic kick in and make me wonder how we could have made Jesus suffer when his passion and crucifixion took place like a thousand years even before I'd been born.

Leaving the movie house, we espied a family friend with her children in tow, including her youngest who couldn't have been more than 10. I felt a stirring of unease. I wondered how the graphic scenes of violence and mayhem would affect this child, if the scenes would not haunt her dreams and bring on nightmares for the next few nights, at least. Provocative, indeed.

* * *

PROVOCATIVE, too, I would guess, for non-Christians. A friend suggested that the movie left me cold because, as a Catholic, I knew the story by heart, having done thousands of "Ways of the Cross" over the years. Someone who didn't know the story of Jesus' passion, especially its bloodier details, she said, would probably have been deeply moved and horrified by the cruelty of the townsfolk.

Mel Gibson took particular care to include a few mitigating lines and scenes to soften the—justified, I feel—impression that the film is really anti-Semitic. So there were a few among the religious hierarchy who thought Jesus was being tried and persecuted unfairly. So there was Simon of Cyrene who proclaimed his innocence even as he was moved to feel pity for the man whose punishment he was forced into sharing.

But I did wonder, as did many Jews, why such a "provocative" movie had to be made at this time. This is not the first time a filmmaker has attempted to depict on film the suffering that Jesus underwent, true, though in these movies the torture the Romans inflicted was sanitized and not so graphically depicted. That's the point, though. It's not as if people have forgotten the story. And it's not as if ordinary Christians were clamoring: "Please, shock us once more with the human suffering of Jesus." In the age of terrorism, we all know too well the depravity of human being versus human being, the depths of human cruelty.

The Catholic Church since the 1960s has taken pains to stress that the passion of Christ was not the "fault" of the Jews, as a people and as a faith community. The great movement of Ecumenism sought to tear down the walls between the "great religions," preaching unity of our common roots rather than the divisions of our hatred. But "The Passion of the Christ" brings the focus back to this "original sin," the indictment of the Jews that led to centuries of self-righteous Christian discrimination and persecution, pogroms and genocide.

* * *

SOMETIMES, I wonder how it is to live as a Muslim, a Jew, a Buddhist, an animist or an atheist in a country like the Philippines, whose Christianity, indeed Catholicism, is so steeped in its soul and mores that it seeps into civic and government affairs with hardly anybody protesting.

Perhaps our country folk among the religious minority know well enough to avoid rocking the boat in a country whose culture was built on centuries of "*moro-moro*" and *senaculo*, the national imagination cultured in a brine of unquestioning religious fervor.

Civics has been described as "a place where anybody, regardless of his faith, finds a place." We scoff about life in Saudi Arabia or Afghanistan, but forget that in many ways, for those who do not share our faith, our country can be just as cruel.

The enemies that books face

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

BOOKS have always been part of my life. My father encouraged reading by taking me to bookstores on weekends. There was not much choice in those days aside from National Bookstore, Alemars, Erehwon and Philippine Education Company. As a matter of fact, the only way I could be persuaded to visit the evil dentist on Rizal Avenue was through the promise of going to Popular Bookstore afterwards. Popular used to be at the entrance of Mapua on Doroteo Jose Street and has since moved to Morato Avenue in Quezon City. Unfortunately, it is closed on Sundays.

There are so many small bookshops around these days, which is a good sign. People must be reading or at least spending on books to spread on their coffee tables and impress guests. Either way, books can be difficult in homes. When the collection grows beyond shelf capacity, the books start to gather on tables, chairs, floors and soon run you out of the house. In my case, they are a health hazard since I am allergic to book dust.

Over the years I have met other bibliophiles and discussed the different dangers there are to books: mold, silverfish, *anay*, and, worst of all, humans who borrow but never return. My greatest fear has always been fire—thieves will never bother with books—because it consumes everything. If it doesn't, the water from the firemen will ruin the whole library completely. The late E. Arsenio Manuel saw his library burn twice, the first time, during the war, and second one in his UP home, after the war. On the second disaster, he spent the night literally on the ashes of his books. Teodoro Agoncillo brought his books to the UP Library thinking the Japanese would spare an academic institution. He was wrong, they made a bonfire of a fuel out of his books. Reading Gabriel Bernardo's 1949 essay on the state of libraries in postwar Philippines made me squirm:

"The National Library and its branches salvaged about 36,600 volumes out of its aggregate collection of 733,000 volumes and pamphlets. It also practically lost its entire collection of 186 paintings, pieces of sculptures, carvings, etc.; 575 historical objects and specimens; 3,543 medals, coins and pieces of jewelry; and 75,534 unused postage stamps.

"The Scientific Library lost its collection of about 357,000 volumes, pamphlets, and periodicals, as well as its entire stock of duplicates for exchange and gift purposes, including a total of 4,194 issues of the Philippine Journal of Science, 79 reprints therefrom, and 933 technical and popular publications of the Bureau of Science and the Department of Agriculture and Commerce. Of this entire collection, only about 300 bound volumes and pamphlets were salvaged. Its library, quarters, furniture and equipment, including its union catalog of Library of Congress printed cards and slips in its general catalog, were also totally destroyed.

"The library of the University of the Philippines with its prewar aggregate collection—about 147,000 volumes, over 45,000 pamphlets, more than 5,000 current periodicals, 9,000 theses and dissertations, 500 manuscripts, over 300 maps, charts, etc., over 10,000 music scores, and 700 phonograph records; and over 1,000 art pieces, were completely destroyed, with the exception of about 3,000 volumes returned by borrowers after the liberation. In addition, it also lost collections of duplicate publications of the University of the Philippines for exchange and gift purposes; official records of the University Library, the Department of Library Science, the University Council, and the Board of Regents (1908-1941), and music collections loaned by private collectors for the annual art exhibits held under the auspices of the Department of Library Science and the President's Committee on Culture; collection of postage stamps (three large boxes of Philippine, United States and foreign stamps); woodcuts, linoleum colored prints, bookplates etc.; collection of five large-sized portraits of past presidents of the University of the Philippines, painted in oil on canvas by prominent local artists [Fernando Amorsolo?] collection of trophies, cups, medals, seals, diplomas, etc. awarded to the University of the Philippines; complete medium-sized book binding machinery, equipment and supplies; and one hand-operated multigraph printing machine with complete accessories and printing supplies; collection of books, etc. mainly Filipiniana, loaned by private collectors for University use. The library building itself was reduced to ruins.

"In 1940, there were 5,934 libraries in the Philippine public school system, holding an aggregate collection of 3,709,939 volumes. Most of these libraries were either looted, seriously damaged or completely destroyed during the enemy occupation and the subsequent fighting for the liberation of the Philippines… Of the 74 libraries surveyed by the Catholic Welfare Organization of the Philippines, 41 had lost their records of holdings. The other 33 libraries had pre-war holdings aggregating 203,751 volumes. The total cash value of losses to the 74 libraries surveyed amounts to $1,087,212.20… no survey on non-Catholic schools."

Fortunately, libraries have since been rebuilt and re-stocked. Reading about the Battle for Manila in 1945, I often think about the non-combatants murdered by the Japanese and the irreplaceable books destroyed.

* * *

Comments are welcome aocampo@ateneo.edu

A different epidemic

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

THIS year's World Health Day passed almost unnoticed because it was Holy Wednesday, with many people on the road, trying to get to their hometowns. Which was in a way ironic because the theme of this year's World Health Day was road safety, an important focus when you consider that in 1997, the latest year for which we have health department statistics, there were 4,952 reported deaths from motor vehicle traffic accidents. That puts traffic accidents up there among the top 15 leading causes of death in the country.

For comparative purposes, the number of deaths from a particular cause is divided by a country's population to get a specific rate. Our death rate from motor vehicle traffic accidents comes out to about 7 per 100,000 which is not too high compared to countries like Brazil (36.9 in 1995), El Salvador (42.2 in 1999), China (15.6 in 1999), the United States (14.7 in 1999) and Japan (7.1 in 2000).

But the rates could be lower, especially when you look at some countries with far more motor vehicles than we have, and yet have lower death rates from vehicular accidents. For example, the United Kingdom and Scandinavian countries had rates lower than 6 per 100,000 and neighboring Singapore has an impressive rate of 1.5 per 100,000 in the year 2000! That city-state, with a population of about 5 million, had 25 deaths from accidents that entire year. Compare that to about 800 deaths in 2003 in Metro Manila, with a population of about 11 million.

Worldwide, some 1.2 million people die and 50 million are injured in motor vehicle accidents each year. The numbers are staggering, tantamount to an epidemic; yet like so many other health problems, these deaths and injuries can be prevented. The WHO issued a report on road safety, listing several preventive measures that can be taken, three of which are well known: speed control, the use of seatbelts and helmets and the enforcement of alcohol limits (i.e., going after drunk drivers). The three measures, unfortunately, are poorly enforced in countries like the Philippines.

There are four other measures listed by WHO that are rarely discussed, so I thought it'd be worthwhile explaining them at some length.

First, there's the matter of improved vehicle standards. Remember how we had to pass a law to ban those gleaming aluminum sheets used on the back of our "owner" jeeps (a Filipino English word referring to custom-built jeeps used for private transport)? That was a good move because they really caused problems when you were driving behind them at night, your headlights literally blinding you.

But there are other vehicle safety standards that we may be less aware of. Those status symbols, SUVs (sports utility vehicles)—glorified trucks—have been criticized in the United States for roll-over problems.

Sometimes the vehicle's construction may be sound, but used improperly, they create safety problems, as in the way we overload our public transport vehicles. In Thailand, those open-bed light trucks are also often overloaded with workers so when a collision takes place, the death toll can be quite high.

We move on to good road designs. The WHO cites the need for safer pedestrian and bicycle routes. Well, we know what happens in the Philippines: If there are sidewalks, they're taken over by vendors. But I learned, too, that many pedestrians do not want to use the sidewalks when they're waiting for a ride. Especially at night, they prefer standing out in the street, for a simple reason: it's safer, at least in terms of avoiding snatchers.

Another area of concern for the WHO is traffic management. Here there's irony because in trying to manage our traffic, the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) has actually mangled what's left of our good roads. Just try to cross any of the roads where the MMDA has introduced traffic management programs and you'll see how they're designed to favor motorists and never mind people trying to cross. Then, too, there are those U-turn slots, which endanger both motorists and pedestrians.

The WHO emphasizes the need for injury surveillance systems, referring to the use of good information. I actually was able to retrieve 2003 national figures of road accident deaths and injuries for Thailand and China, but for the Philippines, I could only get 1997 statistics. We really need more updated figures on vehicular accidents and deaths, figures which should be broken down and analyzed. For example, I was able to find out from the Internet that we had something like 800 deaths last year in Metro Manila alone and that 64 percent of the victims were pedestrians, 19 percent drivers and 17 percent passengers. Those figures suggest that we should be looking into defective road design, faulty traffic management and non-existent pedestrian education. I'd be curious to get more demographic details—how old were the victims, what was the male/female ratio, and so forth—to look at who are vulnerable. Even more importantly, we need good records on the circumstances around the accidents: Were the drivers drinking or on drugs? Did they know traffic rules?

The Thais are now celebrating their Songkran or New Year and because they've done their homework on traffic accidents, they know many of these Songkran accidents happen on motorcycles and are associated with non-use of helmets and drunken driving. The preventive measures they've taken include an information campaign similar to what we do with New Year's Eve for firecrackers, while their police have been on the alert for motorcycles violating the helmet requirement. They've also intensified testing of drivers for alcohol. Already, they claim the number of holiday traffic deaths and injuries have decreased compared to the last two years.

Besides the preventive aspects, the WHO report also refers to the need to strengthen a "chain of help" for tackling the accidents after they occur. This includes training commercial vehicle drivers to administer first aid, and to improve hospitals' capability to handle trauma from vehicular accidents.

As the WHO puts it, road safety is no accident. They suggest having an entire government agency devoted to planning out and implementing a coordinated national road safety strategy. I don't usually believe in creating more bureaucracies, but perhaps this is one instance where a new agency is warranted.

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Comments to miguel@pinoykasi.net

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PROVOCATIVE, too, I would guess, for non-Christians. A friend suggested that the movie left me cold because, as a Catholic, I knew the story by heart, having done thousands of "Ways of the Cross" over the years. Someone who didn't know the story of Jesus' passion, especially its bloodier details, she said, would probably have been deeply moved and horrified by the cruelty of the townsfolk.

Mel Gibson took particular care to include a few mitigating lines and scenes to soften the—justified, I feel—impression that the film is really anti-Semitic. So there were a few among the religious hierarchy who thought Jesus was being tried and persecuted unfairly. So there was Simon of Cyrene who proclaimed his innocence even as he was moved to feel pity for the man whose punishment he was forced into sharing.

But I did wonder, as did many Jews, why such a "provocative" movie had to be made at this time. This is not the first time a filmmaker has attempted to depict on film the suffering that Jesus underwent, true, though in these movies the torture the Romans inflicted was sanitized and not so graphically depicted. That's the point, though. It's not as if people have forgotten the story. And it's not as if ordinary Christians were clamoring: "Please, shock us once more with the human suffering of Jesus." In the age of terrorism, we all know too well the depravity of human being versus human being, the depths of human cruelty.

The Catholic Church since the 1960s has taken pains to stress that the passion of Christ was not the "fault" of the Jews, as a people and as a faith community. The great movement of Ecumenism sought to tear down the walls between the "great religions," preaching unity of our common roots rather than the divisions of our hatred. But "The Passion of the Christ" brings the focus back to this "original sin," the indictment of the Jews that led to centuries of self-righteous Christian discrimination and persecution, pogroms and genocide.

* * *

SOMETIMES, I wonder how it is to live as a Muslim, a Jew, a Buddhist, an animist or an atheist in a country like the Philippines, whose Christianity, indeed Catholicism, is so steeped in its soul and mores that it seeps into civic and government affairs with hardly anybody protesting.

Perhaps our country folk among the religious minority know well enough to avoid rocking the boat in a country whose culture was built on centuries of "*moro-moro*" and *senaculo*, the national imagination cultured in a brine of unquestioning religious fervor.

Civics has been described as "a place where anybody, regardless of his faith, finds a place." We scoff about life in Saudi Arabia or Afghanistan, but forget that in many ways, for those who do not share our faith, our country can be just as cruel.

The enemies that books face

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

BOOKS have always been part of my life. My father encouraged reading by taking me to bookstores on weekends. There was not much choice in those days aside from National Bookstore, Alemars, Erehwon and Philippine Education Company. As a matter of fact, the only way I could be persuaded to visit the evil dentist on Rizal Avenue was through the promise of going to Popular Bookstore afterwards. Popular used to be at the entrance of Mapua on Doroteo Jose Street and has since moved to Morato Avenue in Quezon City. Unfortunately, it is closed on Sundays.

There are so many small bookshops around these days, which is a good sign. People must be reading or at least spending on books to spread on their coffee tables and impress guests. Either way, books can be difficult in homes. When the collection grows beyond shelf capacity, the books start to gather on tables, chairs, floors and soon run you out of the house. In my case, they are a health hazard since I am allergic to book dust.

Over the years I have met other bibliophiles and discussed the different dangers there are to books: mold, silverfish, *anay*, and, worst of all, humans who borrow but never return. My greatest fear has always been fire—thieves will never bother with books—because it consumes everything. If it doesn't, the water from the firemen will ruin the whole library completely. The late E. Arsenio Manuel saw his library burn twice, the first time, during the war, and second one in his UP home, after the war. On the second disaster, he spent the night literally on the ashes of his books. Teodoro Agoncillo brought his books to the UP Library thinking the Japanese would spare an academic institution. He was wrong, they made a bonfire of a fuel out of his books. Reading Gabriel Bernardo's 1949 essay on the state of libraries in postwar Philippines made me squirm:

"The National Library and its branches salvaged about 36,600 volumes out of its aggregate collection of 733,000 volumes and pamphlets. It also practically lost its entire collection of 186 paintings, pieces of sculptures, carvings, etc.; 575 historical objects and specimens; 3,543 medals, coins and pieces of jewelry; and 75,534 unused postage stamps.

"The Scientific Library lost its collection of about 357,000 volumes, pamphlets, and periodicals, as well as its entire stock of duplicates for exchange and gift purposes, including a total of 4,194 issues of the Philippine Journal of Science, 79 reprints therefrom, and 933 technical and popular publications of the Bureau of Science and the Department of Agriculture and Commerce. Of this entire collection, only about 300 bound volumes and pamphlets were salvaged. Its library, quarters, furniture and equipment, including its union catalog of Library of Congress printed cards and slips in its general catalog, were also totally destroyed.

"The library of the University of the Philippines with its prewar aggregate collection—about 147,000 volumes, over 45,000 pamphlets, more than 5,000 current periodicals, 9,000 theses and dissertations, 500 manuscripts, over 300 maps, charts, etc., over 10,000 music scores, and 700 phonograph records; and over 1,000 art pieces, were completely destroyed, with the exception of about 3,000 volumes returned by borrowers after the liberation. In addition, it also lost collections of duplicate publications of the University of the Philippines for exchange and gift purposes, official records of the University Library, the Department of Library Science, the University Council, and the Board of Regents (1908-1941), and music collections loaned by private collectors for the annual art exhibits held under the auspices of the Department of Library Science and the President's Committee on Culture; collection of postage stamps (three large boxes of Philippine, United States and foreign stamps); woodcuts, linoleum colored prints, bookplates etc.; collection of five large-sized portraits of past presidents of the University of the Philippines, painted in oil on canvas by prominent local artists [Fernando Amorsolo?] collection of trophies, cups, medals, seals, diplomas, etc. awarded to the University of the Philippines; complete medium-sized book binding machinery, equipment and supplies; and one hand-operated multigraph printing machine with complete accessories and printing supplies; collection of books, etc. mainly Filipiniana, loaned by private collectors for University use. The library building itself was reduced to ruins.

"In 1940, there were 5,934 libraries in the Philippine public school system, holding an aggregate collection of 3,709,939 volumes. Most of these libraries were either looted, seriously damaged or completely destroyed during the enemy occupation and the subsequent fighting for the liberation of the Philippines... Of the 74 libraries surveyed by the Catholic Welfare Organization of the Philippines, 41 had lost their records of holdings. The other 33 libraries had pre-war holdings aggregating 203,751 volumes. The total cash value of losses to the 74 libraries surveyed amounts to $1,087,212.20. no survey on non-Catholic schools."

Fortunately, libraries have since been rebuilt and re-stocked. Reading about the Battle for Manila in 1945, I often think about the non-combatants murdered by the Japanese and the irreplaceable books destroyed.

* * *

Comments are welcome aocampo@ateneo.edu

A different epidemic

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

THIS year's World Health Day passed almost unnoticed because it was Holy Wednesday, with many people on the road, trying to get to their hometowns. Which was in a way ironic because the theme of this year's World Health Day was road safety, an important focus when you consider that in 1997, the latest year for which we have health department statistics, there were 4,952 reported deaths from motor vehicle traffic accidents. That puts traffic accidents up there among the top 15 leading causes of death in the country.

For comparative purposes, the number of deaths from a particular cause is divided by a country's population to get a specific rate. Our death rate from motor vehicle traffic accidents comes out to about 7 per 100,000 which is not too high compared to countries like Brazil (36.9 in 1995), El Salvador (42.2 in 1999), China (15.6 in 1999), the United States (14.7 in 1999) and Japan (7.1 in 2000).

But the rates could be lower, especially when you look at some countries with far more motor vehicles than we have, and yet have lower death rates from vehicular accidents. For example, the United Kingdom and Scandinavian countries had rates lower than 6 per 100,000 and neighboring Singapore has an impressive rate of 1.5 per 100,000 in the year 2000! That city-state, with a population of about 5 million, had 25 deaths from accidents that entire year. Compare that to about 800 deaths in 2003 in Metro Manila, with a population of about 11 million.

Worldwide, some 1.2 million people die and 50 million are injured in motor vehicle accidents each year. The numbers are staggering, tantamount to an epidemic; yet like so many other health problems, these deaths and injuries can be prevented. The WHO issued a report on road safety, listing several preventive measures that can be taken, three of which are well known: speed control, the use of seatbelts and helmets and the enforcement of alcohol limits (i.e., going after drunk drivers). The three measures, unfortunately, are poorly enforced in countries like the Philippines.

There are four other measures listed by WHO that are rarely discussed, so I thought it'd be worthwhile explaining them at some length.

First, there's the matter of improved vehicle standards. Remember how we had to pass a law to ban those gleaming aluminum sheets used on the back of our "owner" jeeps (a Filipino English word referring to custom-built jeeps used for private transport)? That was a good move because they really caused problems when you were driving behind them at night, your headlights literally blinding you.

But there are other vehicle safety standards that we may be less aware of. Those status symbols, SUVs (sports utility vehicles)—glorified trucks—have been criticized in the United States for roll-over problems.

Sometimes the vehicle's construction may be sound, but used improperly, they create safety problems, as in the way we overload our public transport vehicles. In Thailand, those open-bed light trucks are also often overloaded with workers so when a collision takes place, the death toll can be quite high.

We move on to good road designs. The WHO cites the need for safer pedestrian and bicycle routes. Well, we know what happens in the Philippines: If there are sidewalks, they're taken over by vendors. But I learned, too, that many pedestrians do not want to use the sidewalks when they're waiting for a ride. Especially at night, they prefer standing out in the street, for a simple reason: it's safer, at least in terms of avoiding snatchers.

Another area of concern for the WHO is traffic management. Here there's irony because in trying to manage our traffic, the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) has actually mangled what's left of our good roads. Just try to cross any of the roads where the MMDA has introduced traffic management programs and you'll see how they're designed to favor motorists and never mind people trying to cross. Then, too, there are those U-turn slots, which endanger both motorists and pedestrians.

The WHO emphasizes the need for injury surveillance systems, referring to the use of good information. I actually was able to retrieve 2003 national figures of road accident deaths and injuries for Thailand and China, but for the Philippines, I could only get 1997 statistics. We really need more updated figures on vehicular accidents and deaths, figures which should be broken down and analyzed. For example, I was able to find out from the Internet that we had something like 800 deaths last year in Metro Manila alone and that 64 percent of the victims were pedestrians, 19 percent drivers and 17 percent passengers. Those figures suggest that we should be looking into defective road design, faulty traffic management and non-existent pedestrian education. I'd be curious to get more demographic details—how old were the victims, what was the male/female ratio, and so forth—to look at who are vulnerable. Even more importantly, we need good records on the circumstances around the accidents: Were the drivers drinking or on drugs? Did they know traffic rules?

The Thais are now celebrating their Songkran or New Year, and because they've done their homework on traffic accidents, they know many of these Songkran accidents happen on motorcycles and are associated with non-use of helmets and drunken driving. The preventive measures they've taken include an information campaign similar to what we do with New Year's Eve for firecrackers, while their police have been on the alert for motorcycles violating the helmet requirement. They've also intensified testing of drivers for alcohol. Already, they claim the number of holiday traffic deaths and injuries have decreased compared to the last two years

Besides the preventive aspects, the WHO report also refers to the need to strengthen a "chain of help" for tackling the accidents after they occur. This includes training commercial vehicle drivers to administer first aid, and to improve hospitals' capability to handle trauma from vehicular accidents

As the WHO puts it, road safety is no accident. They suggest having an entire government agency devoted to planning out and implementing a coordinated national road-safety strategy. I don't usually believe in creating more bureaucracies, but perhaps this is one instance where a new agency is warranted.

* * *

Comments to miguel@pinoykasi.net

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

No to another year in high school

THE DEPARTMENT of Education has directed the addition of another year (fifth year) in high school starting next school year 2004-2005. According to the DepEd, this will uplift the quality of education in our country.

Our educational system cannot and can never be upgraded for the simple reason that there are so many unworthy teachers, products of diploma mills, who can't even speak or write decent English. They are in their positions—if not because of political recommendation, backing and patronage—at the behest of corrupt directors, superintendents, supervisors and principals.

It's not the length of time in schools that matters, it is the quality of teachers and teaching. Let us stop "politicizing" education. Let merit prevail. Remove all useless subjects like Spanish, Chinese, History and Religion. They are irrelevant and obsolete now. Let's concentrate on more current important knowledge needs. A class should have only 18-20 students. Incompetent teachers should be removed and the billions of pesos saved from their salaries and benefits, plus the unexpended budget for the "cancelled" 5th year, should be reallocated for the benefit of the deserving teachers. Only by giving decent salaries to deserving teachers can we prevent brain drain.

Retired teachers should not be permitted to teach. Let them enjoy their pensions. Let intelligent "new blood" take their place. Raze all diploma mills. It is only then that we can uplift the educational system.

—**LAMBERTO URBI GUADIZ JR.,**
7 Doneza St., Aparri, Cagayan

Don't blame the Church

IT is all right to air our opinion, but we should restrain ourselves from blaming the Catholic Church for the population growth. The Catholic Church only wants to protect the truth she teaches.

We have to realize that we are talking here about life. It is God who gives a child to the married couple. They can't have a child if God doesn't want to give them one, so we have no right to suppress life because it is not ours but God's. The Catholic Church allows married couples to use natural family planning which promotes self-control and self-discipline.

Church and State are absolutely different in their governance. The Church just intervenes when the State is going beyond the natural law.

Poverty in our country is one of our problems, but it is not the major problem. Corruption in the government is the main reason why the incidence of poverty in the country is high. If we just serve honestly, we will improve because we will have a lot of resources. A high-profile personality in Spain commented that the Philippines has a lot of resources that can be used to uplift the poor. We just have to learn how to carry out our work with a lot of honesty. Population control is not the best solution to lessen poverty. Let us minimize our corruption and there will be hope for our country.

—**ALITA A. CADIENTE,**
Calamba City,
Laguna 2047

Going the way of previous disasters

WHAT does one do when her search for a missing loved one is met with bureaucratic red tape and indifference?

What does one do when government seems to quickly forget the anguish and suffering of those who have literally lost loved ones?

What does one do when one's limited resources have almost dried up while going from office to office, either looking for tidbits of news on the remains of her victim-relative, or justice in the form of decent compensation for the immeasurable loss one continues to suffer?

What does one do when she is surrounded by seeming do-gooders—whether they are politicians or lawyers—offering all kinds of easy and quick-fix solutions which seem so promising and too good to be true?

What does one do when she reads the papers reporting one explanation after another for the explosion and the fire that led to so many deaths and disappearances? While there is time to investigate and theorize on the causes of the SuperFerry tragedy, is there ample time given to attend to the living, who have become tired, depressed, frustrated and nearing despair, fighting for the dead?

I went to Luneta last Friday, March 12, 2004. I ran the short distance from the statues of the "Two Carabaos" across the monument of Jose Rizal to the Bayview Hotel where I celebrated a Mass for justice for the victims of the SuperFerry 14 tragedy. We requested the Office of the Public Attorney to help especially the poorer families. Lawyer Percy Acosta agreed to come and help. I don't know how all these will help. I don't know when and in what form help will actually come. All I know is that people are nearing exhaustion and despair.

All the victims of other disasters have gone through the same pattern of government intervention: massive media exposure at the beginning, immediate relief and aid to the survivors, aid for funeral expenses, etc. The following days are given to analyses of and explanations for what could have happened. Legal groups and individuals then step in, the most prominent being lawyers identified with the owners of the ship, plane, bus, etc. involved in the mishap. Interest in the tragedy lasts for as long as media talk about it. Then pictures and articles slide from the front pages to the inside pages; then newer, though not necessarily more pressing concerns, take over.

In a nation of people with very short attention spans, even a disaster as bad as SuperFerry 14 quickly slips into oblivion: the Ormoc flashflood, the Baguio and Northern Luzon earthquake, the Pinatubo eruption, the Cherry Hills landslide, the Air Philippines crash, Edsa II and III, the Payatas mudslide and now SuperFerry 14.

Let these phantoms haunt us, especially our government officials who seem quick to forget and easily become indifferent to the small people while they continue in their typical and predictable ways of favoring the influential and rich people.

—**FR. ROBERTO**
P. REYES,
Gomburza,
Camerino cor.
Legaspi Streets,
Project 4, QC

A basic flaw in privatization

IT is good that the government is taking over Maynilad to protect public interest. But the transaction should be transparent because—whether this is admitted or not—it involves the taxpayers' money.

The Maynilad takeover shows the negative side of privatizing public utilities. A private corporation is created to serve its stockholders, not the people. Thus, the people are placed at the disadvantage when public utilities which provide basic needs are privatized. We have also seen this happen in the privatization of Petron and Napocor (still ongoing).

For our existing President or the incoming president, maybe, it is time to do some rethinking of the privatization program of the government. Let's look at the long term, not only at the short term.

I also believe that it is the obligation of the government to provide such services to the people.

—**ALDWIN M. DE VERA,**
aldwin@radiumnet.com

Absentee voting not for seafarers

ABSENTEE voting will never work for seafarers. Records show that out of 250,000 seafarers only 2,500 registered for absentee voting, of whom only 500 were able to vote. Here's why: before a seafarer can vote he has to register as absentee voter either in the Comelec office in Intramuros or in his home town. What about those already on board?

While the Comelec said he can also register in any Philippine embassy or consulate abroad, his vessel is constantly moving from one port or country to another. If, by chance, the country where the vessel is presently in has a Philippine embassy or consulate, it is mostly likely located hundreds of miles away from the port. And if by chance a seafarer was finally successful in registering, even at the risk of missing his vessel or getting fired by the shipmaster for not reporting for work, how can he cast his vote in the middle of the ocean?

Even the mail voting system will not work.

As one honest senator confided, "Actually, the absentee-voting system is not for seafarers, but only for land-based workers."

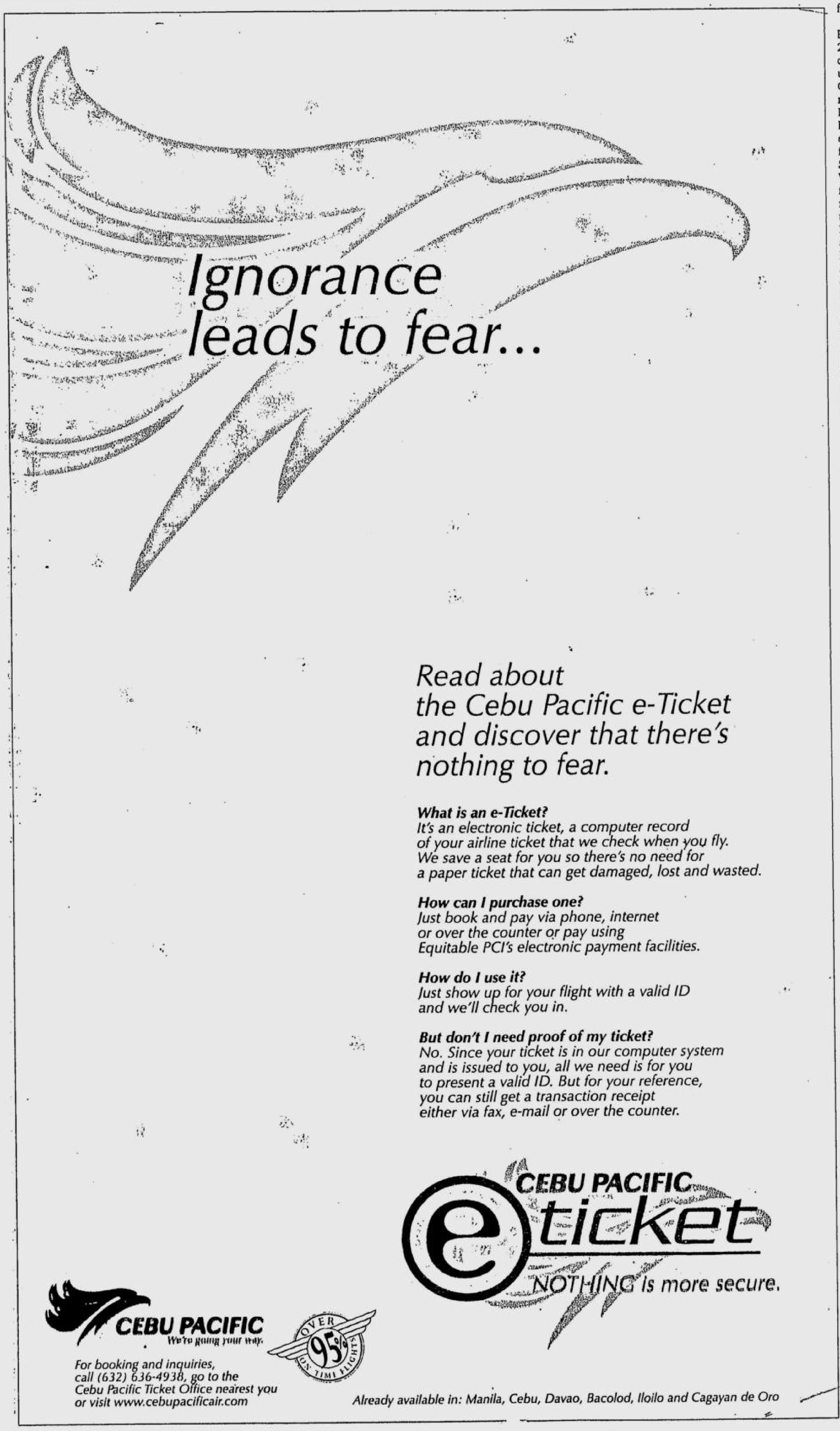
It's about time that somebody should represent the seafarers in Congress. Otherwise, they will always be discriminated and remain second-class citizens in their own native land.

—**CAPT. VICTOR Y. ALVIOLA,**
Maritime Party,
vya@bouvetshpg.com

ERRATUM

In the INQUIRER *editorial last Sunday, April 11, 2004, titled "Politicians and conscience," President Macapagal-Arroyo was quoted as having said: "Maybe he is following orders, I really don't know. But if he follows his conscience I don't see how you can support a sixth grader for the presidency."*

The statement was made not by the President but by Ignacio Arroyo, her brother-in-law. Our apologies.—Ed.



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Ex-agriculture exec denies Red tag

By J. Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY— "I am not a communist."

Former agriculture undersecretary Celestino Martinez Jr. issued this statement after Major Melquiades Feliciano, group commander of the Civil Relations Group in Central Visayas, tagged him and his son as supporters of the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army (CPP-NPA).

"If Major Feliciano is listening, he is crazy . . . he is out of his mind. He is stupid," Martinez said in an interview over dyLA.

Feliciano earlier linked Martinez and his son, Bogo Mayor Celestino "Tining" Martinez III with the underground movement.

Claims

He claimed that the mayor paid P4,500 in financial support to the National Democratic Front in April 2003, as indicated in the receipt recovered by the military.

He also claimed that Martinez established a non-government organization (NGO)-Northern Cebu Development Center Inc. (NCDCI)-in 1995 when he was still a congressman.

The NCDCI, which is involved in livelihood projects, was being infiltrated by the CPP because its organizers had ties with CPP personalities, he added.

Martinez served as representative of Cebu's fourth district from 1989 to 1995. He is now running for governor under the local party Independent Masa.

His wife, Rep. Clavel Asas Martinez, and his son are both seeking reelection.

Sympathizer

Martinez said he initiated the establishment of the NGO in 1995 and that the NCDCI's organizers were former members of the left-leaning Bagong Alyansang Makabayan and were identified before with former Gov. Vicente de la Serna.

De la Serna himself was also accused of being an NPA supporter when he was the governor from 1992 to 1995.

.While he did not like some of Bayan's advocacies, Martinez said he agreed with the group's intention to educate the poor of their rights.

Martinez said that when they started putting up the NGO, he made it clear to the NCDCI that he was not a communist and did not believe in the communist ideology.

The main purpose of NCDCI was to establish different cooperatives in the barangays in the entire fourth district.

Through the countrywide development fund (CDF), Martinez released funds for the projects of these cooperatives.

Martinez said most of these cooperatives no longer need assistance now.

Nagtatanong lang po...

Box 1.1: Where did the money go?

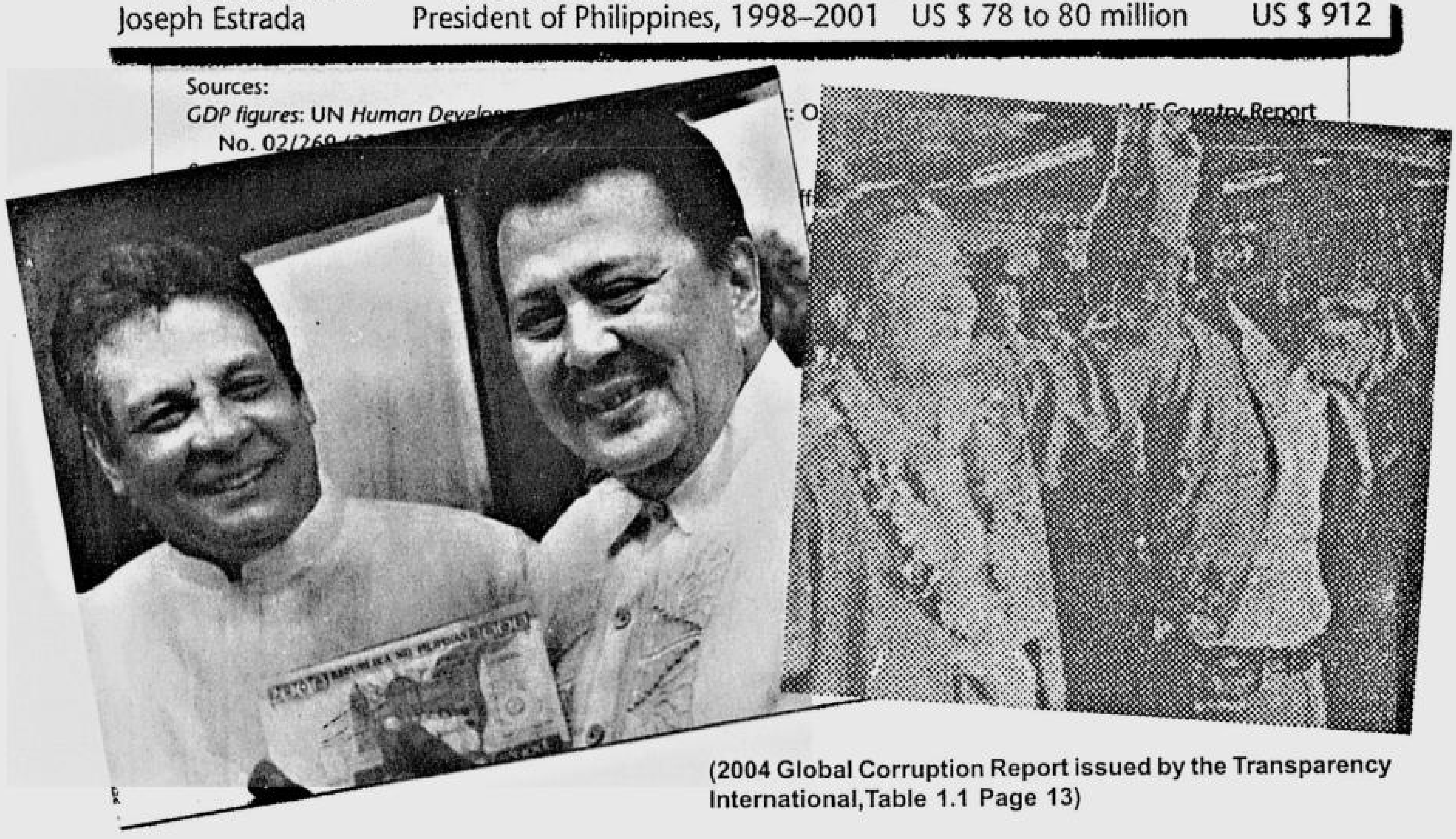
Table 1.1 illustrates the scale of the problem of alleged political corruption through estimates of the funds allegedly embezzled by some of the most notorious leaders of the last 20 years. To put the figures in context, the right-hand column gives the GDP per capita of each country.

The 10 leaders in the table are not necessarily the 10 most corrupt leaders of the period and the estimates of funds allegedly embezzled are extremely approximate. The table is drawn from respected and widely available sources. In general, very little is known about the amounts allegedly embezzled by many leaders.

Table 1.1

Head of government		Estimates of funds allegedly embezzled	GDP per capita (2001)
Mohamed Suharto	President of Indonesia, 1967–98	US $ 15 to 35 billion	US $ 695
Ferdinand Marcos	President of Philippines, 1972–86	US $ 5 to 10 billion	US $ 912
Sani Abacha	President of Nigeria, 1993–98	US $ 2 to 5 billion	US $ 319
Slobodan Milosevic	President of Serbia/Yugoslavia, 1989–2000	US $ 1 billion	n/a
Jean-Claude Duvalier	President of Haiti, 1971–86	US $ 300 to 800 million	US $ 460
Alberto Fujimori	President of Peru, 1990–2000	US $ 600 million	US $ 2,051
Pavlo Lazarenko	Prime Minister of Ukraine, 1996–97	US $ 114 to 200 million	US $ 766
Arnoldo Alemán	President of Nicaragua, 1997–2002	US $ 100 million	US $ 490
Joseph Estrada	President of Philippines, 1998–2001	US $ 78 to 80 million	US $ 912

Sources:
GDP figures: UN *Human Develo*
No. 02/269



(2004 Global Corruption Report issued by the Transparency International,Table 1.1 Page 13)

> *"Tell me who your friends are and I will tell you who you are."*
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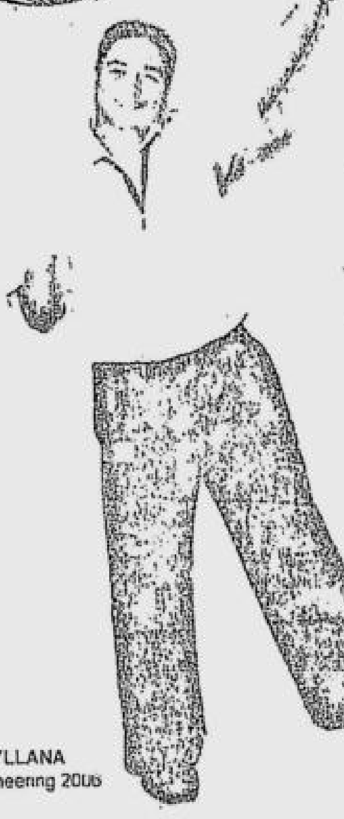

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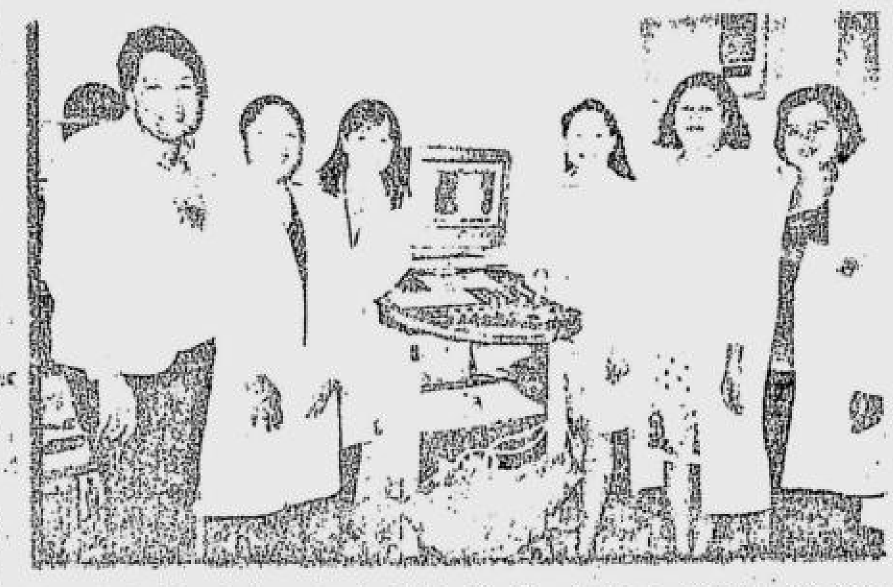

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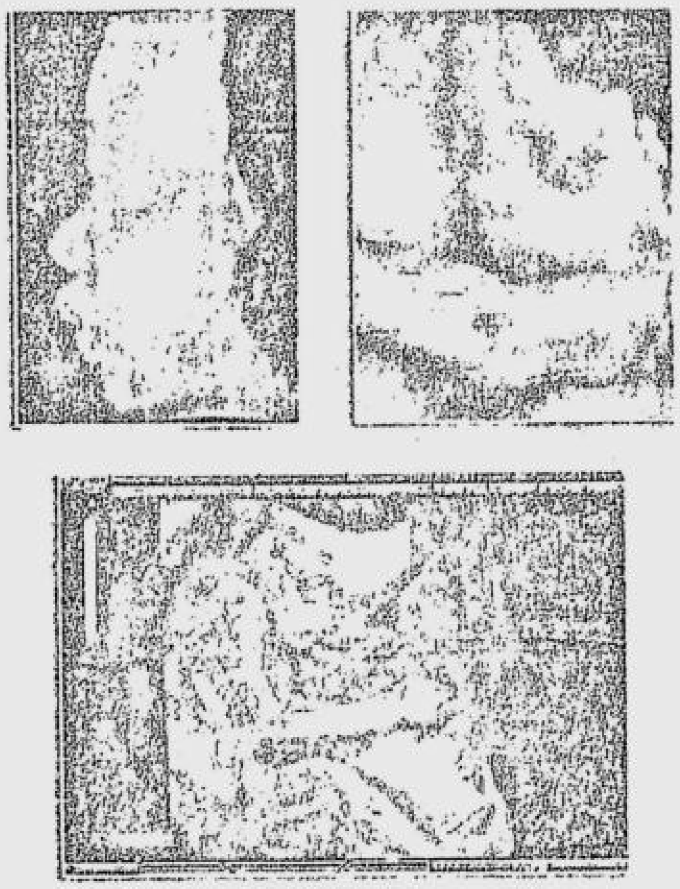

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Cops, NGO fight over reb's body

LUCENA CITY—Leftist groups and policemen have been playing a tug of war over the body of the slain New People's Army rebel that has been lying in state in a funeral parlor in Tiaong for over a week now.

Members of the human rights group Karapatan in Southern Tagalog, have been holding vigil in Funeraria Glorey-Lopez in Tiaong where the bodies of three New People's Army guerrillas killed in an encounter last week were brought.

The bodies of two rebels—Joel Mendoza, from Paluan town, Occidental Mindoro, and Eduardo "Ka Kenneth" Garcia, from Atimonan, Quezon—were already claimed by their relatives and have been transported back to their towns.

However, the last body belonging to a certain Lope "Ka Ex" Macalalad, a native of Buenavista town, Quezon, is now the subject of intense debate between the leftist group and the police.

Armand Albarillo, Karapatan-ST spokesperson, claimed they have with them a relative of the dead NPA to claim the body but the police still refused to turn over the cadaver.

The police also turned down Tiaong Mayor Leleng Umali, who called for the release of the cadaver to Karapatan.

"We want a legitimate and rightful claimant, meaning the nearest relative of the dead—like parents, siblings or any close kin. We just could not give the body to any claimant presenting themselves as relatives, much more to the Karapatan group. They will just use the body as propaganda material," Senior Supt. Leo Kison, Quezon police director, told the INQUIRER.

Close to 100 members of Karapatan-ST have been watching over the casket of the dead NPA.

Kison pointed out that if no nearest relatives would come forward to claim the body, the police would be the one to give the slain rebel a decent burial.

The INQUIRER learned that the dead rebel was a ranking communist guerrilla in Southern Tagalog.

"He rose from the ranks since he embraced the revolution in the '80s. He was a tested and gallant Red-fighter," said a source from the underground movement.

The informant said the close relatives of the slain NPA were all afraid to come forward to claim the body. *Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Bishop calls plan to legalize 'jueteng' bankrupt idea

DAGUPAN CITY—Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz called the renewed efforts to revive the proposal to legalize jueteng as a "bankruptcy of decency" and "desperation in misery."

"Legalize jueteng? What an original thought. What a brilliant idea!" Cruz, who has been waging a protracted war against the illegal numbers game, said in a press statement.

He lamented that jueteng, also called the "poor man's game," is now envisioned to finance government expenses and to fund pork barrel "to the ecstasy of the gambling lords (who) will go to the banks abroad more often."

Cruz, past president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, also bewailed how gambling is considered the "salvation" of the country.

"This is why more casinos are scheduled to be built, to be opened and operated. This is why more and more 'one-arm-bandits' have been and are still being installed in many places in the country. With the vice of gambling comes the host of vicious people with vicious agenda," he said.

He said aside from bingo, lotto and jueteng, some might even come up with the vision of legalizing *pula o puti* (the color game red or white), *karera ng daga* (rat race), *tong-its* (a card game), *mahjong*, *tupada* (backyard cockfights) and *gagamba* (spider fights).

"Why not legalize drugs, prostitution and kidnapping among other means of income for the government? Their combined earnings might prove enough for the national budget," Cruz said.

Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

ROUNDUP

4 teens drown in Laguna de Bay

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—What could have been a jovial celebration of Easter Sunday turned into a tragedy when four teenagers drowned while taking a dip in Laguna de Bay. Laguna police director Senior Supt. Edwin Corvera identified the victims as Mary Joy Casiano, 10; Allan John Alejandro, 15; Marivic Galang, 18; and Marlon Remollano, 13, all residents of Barangay Marinig in Cabuyao, Laguna. The victims were swimming along with their friends in the area when one of their companions started to swim into the deeper part of the lake. He said rescuers were able to recover the bodies of Casiano, Alejandro and Galang at around 1 p.m., some two hours after they disappeared, while the cadaver of Remollano remained missing. ***Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

'COPS' revived in Baguio

BAGUIO CITY—The Baguio City Police Office is reviving the Community-Oriented Policing System (Cops), a neighborhood watch program, which was subsidized by local bankers and businessmen nine years ago. Senior Supt. Isagani Nerez, city police director, said street crimes require constant community monitoring because some of the more serious incidences occur in fights that occasionally erupt in the villages. Nerez made the announcement after he presented to reporters the third most wanted fugitive in Baguio. John Pasan, 21, a student from Mankayan, Benguet, had been in hiding for months after he allegedly stabbed and killed a drinking partner during a June 11, 2003 brawl. Pasan denied the charges. ***Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

EU monitors polls

BANAUE, Ifugao—The European Union is closely watching how election-related activities are shaping up in the Philippines, said Ambassador Jan de Kok, head of delegation of the European Commission to the Philippines. De Kok said EU is monitoring the country's electoral processes because the next EU development aid for the Philippines, which starts in 2006, covers programs strengthening administration and governance of local governments in rural communities. "We are particularly interested about how local government units will fare after the elections and in the near future," De Kok said. He and five other EU ambassadors recently visited some rural development projects of the Central Cordillera Agricultural Program, an eight-year program of the EU and the Department of Agriculture that ends in July this year. ***Maurice Malanes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

Lapid brod in hot water

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Three residents of Porac, Pampanga, have asked the Commission on Elections to disqualify the older brother of Gov. Manuel "Lito" Lapid from the congressional race in the second district in this province. Porac Vice Mayor Remberto "Rey" Lapid is running against Vice Gov. Juan Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo, President Macapagal-Arroyo's eldest son, in the congressional race. In a petition, Porac residents Ponciano Canlas, Charlie Canlas and Roberto Canlas accused Lapid of premature campaigning by printing, painting, posting, and hanging of campaign materials in various parts of the second district since last year. But Lapid's camp dismissed the case as "politically motivated." Lapid's lawyer, former Bacolor Mayor Ananias Canlas, said there was no legal basis in the case filed against the mayor. ***Jun Malig, PDI Central Luzon Desk***

New PMA cadets

BAGUIO CITY—The Philippine Military Academy received on April 1 the 290 new cadets who will comprise the academy's Class of 2008. Maj. Gen. Edilberto Adan, PMA superintendent, swore in 30 new female cadets and 260 male cadets at the Borromeo Field. The cadets are among the 11,067 applicants who took the PMA entrance examinations in September last year. PMA records showed that this year's incoming batch of cadets has 13,629 original applicants. ***Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

2 cities, 4 towns in E. Visayas declared hot spots

By Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—The Commission on Elections in Eastern Visayas has identified two cities and four municipalities in the region as potential hot spots in the May 10 elections.

Jose Nick Mendros, Comelec legal officer, identified these as the cities of Ormoc in Leyte and Calbayog in Samar; Oras and Guiuan towns in Eastern Samar; Tarangan town in Samar; and Caibiran town, Biliran.

More areas might be classified as hot spots as the elections draw near. He said some field officers had yet to submit their assessment of the political situation in their localities.

Mendros said the hot spots would be placed under Comelec control to prevent any untoward incident. The poll body would form a task force, which will administer and supervise the conduct of elections in these areas. Policemen and soldiers will act as "augmentation forces," he added.

Under this set up, Mendros said Comelec Commissioner Rufino Javier, who is in charge of Eastern Visayas, will head the task force.

His members would be Comelec regional director Ferdinand Rafanan, Chief Supt. Dionisio Coloma, police regional chief; and Major Gen. Glenn Rabonza, commanding general of the 8th Infantry Division.

Coloma earlier identified 20 areas in the region as potential hot spots. Six of these were included in the Comelec list identified by Mendros.

Coloma said intense political rivalry, presence of armed men and history of election-related violence were the reasons these 20 areas were classified as potential flashpoints in the May elections.

But Mendros explained that the listing of the two agencies differs because intense political rivalry was the primary reason why these six areas were considered as hot spots.

He cited the case of Ormoc where the election was hotly contested between the Codillas and the Locsins.

Albert Mitchell Locsin is challenging the reelection bid of Rep. Eufrocino Codilla in Leyte's fourth district.

Codilla's son, Eric, is running for mayor of Ormoc against incumbent Mayor Carmelo Locsin, father of Albert Mitchell.

The Codillas belong to the ruling Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrat while the Locsins are with the Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC).

Calbayog was included in the list following the killing of Tarangan Mayor Aniceto Olaje who was gunned down inside the city's sports complex last Feb. 28.

Tarangan was classified as a Comelec hot spot because of the murder of Mayor Federico Montero in downtown Catbalogan, Samar last April 3, 35 days after Olaje was killed.

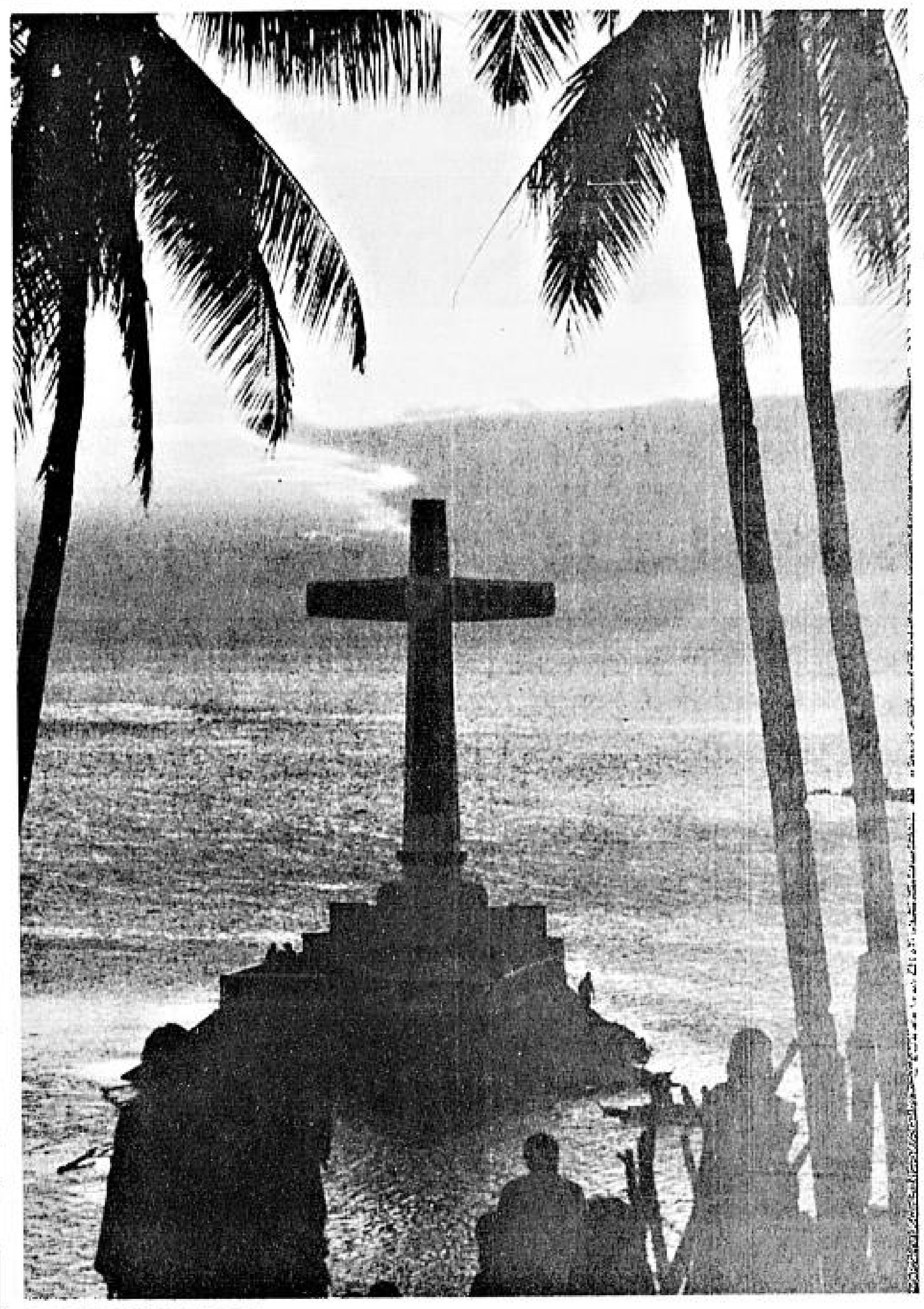
Politics was reportedly one of the angles being considered in both killings.

Montero was the vice mayor of Tarangan who assumed the mayoral post following the killing of Olaje.

The other three towns were also in the list due to the prevailing intense political situation there, Mendros said.

He said the town of Caibiran was also included in the list of hot spots after the Provincial Peace and Order Council requested the Comelec to place the town under its control due to intense political rivalry between the two mayoral candidates.

The request, he added, had been forwarded to their central office.



CAMIGUIN CROSS

PDI PHOTO/JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

This cross, one of several tourist attractions in Camiguin islands, is the entrance to a sunken cemetery a few meters below sea level. The cemetery sunk due to a volcanic eruption in 1871.

2 soldiers die in Masbate clash

LEGAZPI CITY—Two military men died in a clash between the Army's 65th Infantry Battalion and New People's Army in Sitio Suba, Barangay Kiromero of San Pascual town, Masbate.

Maj. Domingo Maceda, spokesperson of the 901st Infantry Brigade based in Villahermosa, Daraga, Albay, identified the casualties as SSgt. Wilfredo Umbao and Pvt. Jaime Paraiso.

Maceda said the government troops encountered about 30 combined NPA rebels and hired political goons.

"We have a suspicion that there's an NPA training field in the area where they train their new recruits," Maceda told the INQUIRER.

He said he believed an undetermined number of rebels were killed and wounded during the incident due to bloodstains spilled in the area.

The firefight lasted for more than an hour.

The rebels withdrew towards different directions after the firefight.

Col. Ramon Santos, 901st IB commanding officer, immediately ordered a hot pursuit operation against the rebels.

In Cavite, suspected NPA rebels gunned down their alleged former comrade and his five-year-old daughter in Sitio Putol, Barangay Pulong Bunga, Silang, Cavite on Sunday night.

Chief Insp. Conrado Gongon, town police chief, said victims Eddie Durante, 45, farmer and an alleged ex-NPA rebel, and his daughter, Eddielyn, were about to go to sleep when a group of unidentified armed men arrived and waylaid their house.

Gongon said Durante died from at least ten bullet wounds on his body while his daughter died from a lone bullet wound on her head.

He said police recovered several empty bullet shells of .45-caliber pistol and .30-caliber carbine.

Although the police have yet to know the real motive of the killings, they said the NPA could have been upset with Durante's bragging that he was a former communist rebel whenever he was drunk. *Joyce Mejillano and Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Fisheries exec reappointed despite protests

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—The controversial Rolando Platon, chief of the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center-Aquaculture Department (Seafdec-AQD), has been reappointed to a fifth term despite the clamor of scientists and employees of the center for his ouster.

In a letter dated April 8, Seafdec secretary general Niwes Ruangpanit congratulated Platon, as the Seafdec's council of directors unanimously confirmed his appointment during their 36th meeting in Bangkok, Thailand from April 6 to 9.

Platon will serve a one-year term that took effect on April 8, said Ruangpanit. The council is composed of representatives of Seafdec's 10 member countries: Philippines, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

In a statement relayed by Eva Aldon, Seafdec's information assistant, Platon said he was happy over his reappointment, which he said showed that he still had the confidence of the council.

But the Concerned Scientists and Employees of the Seafdec-AQD (CSESA) said they would continue holding protest actions to call for the ouster of Platon and Dan Baliao, head of the administration and finance division, said scientist Relicardo Coloso.

"It (Platon's reappointment) is the council's prerogative but we have decided to continue with our fight," Coloso told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

The CSESA has led protest actions for more than six months in front of the center's compound in Tigbauan town, 22 km south of Iloilo City.

The group claims the support of more than half of the more than 200 rank and file employees and 40 of the 48 scientists of the center.

The group has accused Platon and Baliao of mismanagement and inefficient leadership.

Denying the charges, Platon said the discontent of those calling for his ouster was caused by the reduction of the center's budget from P127 million in 2003 to only P100 million this year.

This has resulted to the scaling down of the center's operations and the slashing of benefits of the staff.

Last month, residents of Barangay Buyuan, where the center is located, joined the protesting employees in calling for the ouster of Platon and Baliao after the latter allegedly bad-mouthed residents and officials of the village.

Baliao has denied the accusations.

More soldiers deployed to guard power facility

CEBU CITY—More troops were deployed in Daanbantayan, Cebu amid reports that the New People's Army (NPA) planned to sabotage the submarine cables of the National Transmission Corp. (Transco).

Lt. Colonel Rolando Malinao, commander of the 78th Infantry Battalion based in northern Cebu, declined to say how many soldiers were sent to the municipality for security reasons.

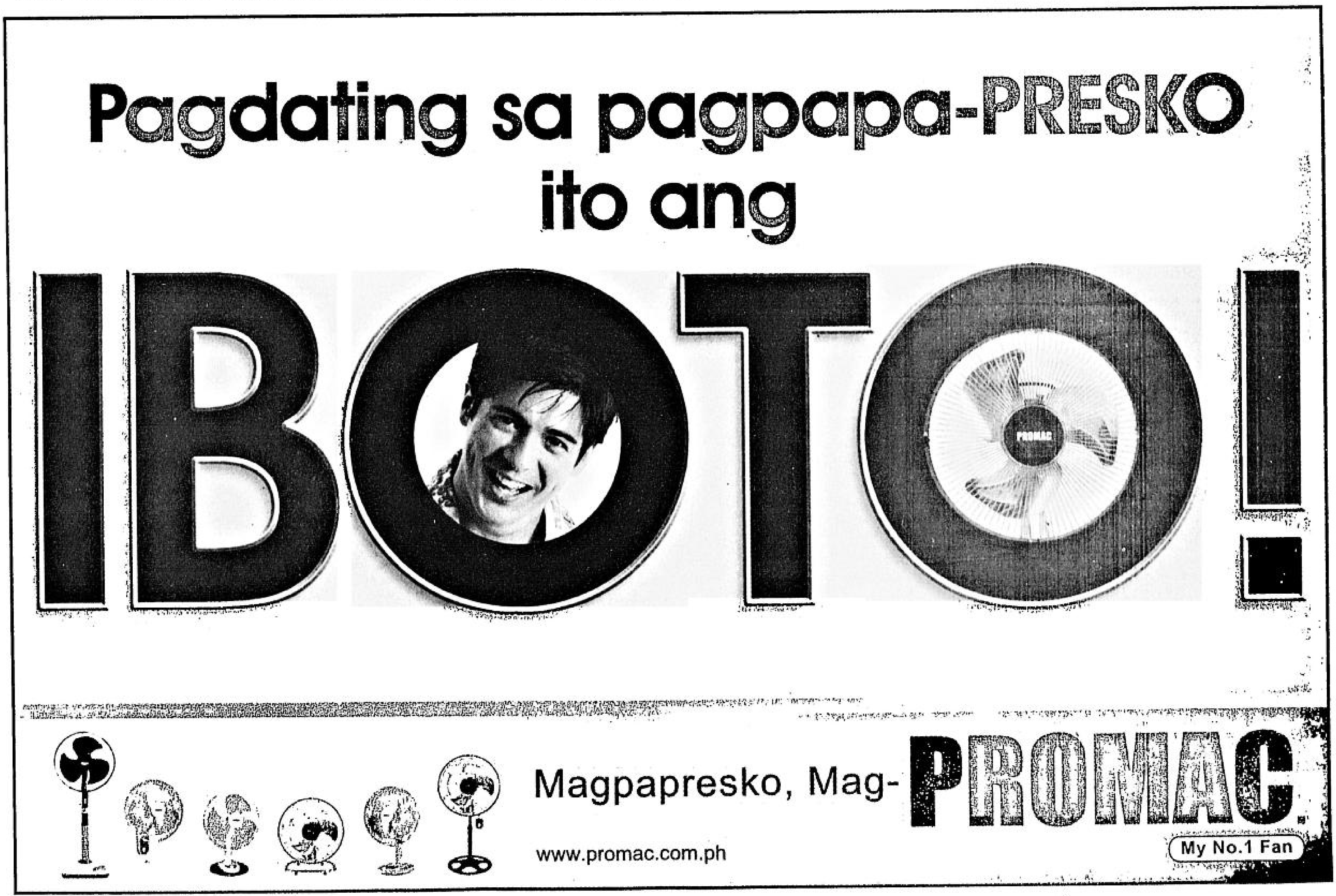
"It is just enough to protect the facility," he said.

Malinao said these soldiers from the 78th IB were tasked to secure the four submarine cables in the waters off Daanbantayan, about 128 kilometers north of here.

He said the order to deploy more troops came from the national headquarters after receiving information that the NPA would sabotage these cables.

He denied allegations the soldiers were sent to the area to intimidate supporters of a political family, saying "the deployment was only in response to the prevailing threat."

Malinao said the assignment of his men was limited only in securing the 32-km long cables. *Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau*



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INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Editor **Jun Bandayrel**
Bureau Chief **Rolando B. Fernandez**

Bolinao villagers save their marine resources

By Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes
Bolinao, Pangasinan

BOLINAO's rich marine environment is in good hands through the efforts of fishermen of Balingasay village.

PDI PHOTO

PROTECT and respect the sea and it will reward you in return. Fishermen in Barangay Balingasay in Bolinao, Pangasinan, learned this lesson when they saved their marine resources from degradation through the establishment of the Balingasay fish sanctuary.

The sanctuary, established six years ago, now teems with different species of fish and shells. The damaged coral reef in the 14.77-hectare sanctuary was also observed to be recovering.

From a daily catch of less than two kilograms before the sanctuary's establishment, fishermen now report a daily catch of between 3 and 20 kg.

"Every villager has become a protector of the sanctuary," said Jesem Gabatin, 41, chair of the Samahan ng Mangingisda at Mamamayan sa Balingasay (Sammabal), which put up the sanctuary with the help of nongovernment organizations and the local government.

But it was not always that way. Revitalizing the marine resources was full of struggles and beset with problems posed even by some fishermen, who thought the Sammabal was being "selfish" when it disallowed fishing inside and around the protected area.

In 1995, fishermen noted the depletion of marine resources in the waters of Balingasay. At that time, the village's fishing ground was suffering from the effects of overfishing and illegal fishing through the use of fine mesh nets and dynamites.

The fishermen's daily catch then was hardly enough for the needs of their families. The corals were dying fast, too, unable to survive the daily onslaught of chemicals and explosives used by unscrupulous fishermen. "We were worried," Gabatin said.

Since the municipal waters (area of 15 km from the shore) would no longer yield fish, the fishermen were forced to venture into deep sea fishing, which was dangerous because they had small boats.

Environmental degradation

But the villagers knew that they had to act on the problem. After all, the sea is their major source of livelihood and if environmental degradation continues, they will all suffer.

Gabatin gathered some residents and formed Sammabal. They then asked the local government to help them establish a marine sanctuary. The reaction, however, was lukewarm.

It helped that NGOs, such as the Community-Based Coastal Resource Management Program (CBCRMP), and local environmentalists, like Margaret Celeste, continued to support them.

But it was only in 1997, through the help of local officials led by Mayor Jesus Celeste, that the residents' dream to establish a protected area was finally fulfilled.

On Dec. 1, 1997, the Bolinao municipal council approved Resolution No. 58, declaring Barangay Balingasay a marine sanctuary and fishery reserve where all kinds of fishing activities were prohibited.

With the help of the CBCRMP (composed of University of the Philippines Marine Science Institute, University of the Philippines' College of Social Work and Community Development and the Haribon Foundation), a coralline area in the municipal water was identified and cordoned off with a buoy.

Sammabal members worked out a schedule to ensure that a group of fishermen always patrolled the area and warded off illegal fishermen.

The Bolinao Marine Ecological Fund Foundation Inc. (Bomeffi) built a floating guardhouse near the sanctuary where the patrolling fishermen would stay.

Uncooperative

But some illegal fishermen, including some villagers, proved to be uncooperative in the "mission" to revive the sea.

Gabatin recalled that some men threw stones at houses of Sammabal members, trying to intimidate them into allowing them to fish in the area.

Yet Gabatin and some members stood their ground, even as some members withdrew their membership when, during the first year of the sanctuary, there was no noticeable improvement in their catch.

Fishermen from other towns and provinces also disregarded the buoys surrounding the sanctuary and tried to harvest from it.

Several times, the fishermen themselves brought fellow fishermen to the office of the mayor to complain about illegal activities in the sea.

"Many were stubborn," said Annabelle Echavez, 40, Sammabal secretary.

But Gabatin said these were things of the past. "Now, we do not have to guard the sanctuary every minute. We only do patrols in the area," he said.

Occasionally, some fishermen from other towns and even foreigners still enter the no-fishing sanctuary. But the villagers are always on their toes and ready to bring the intruders to the police or to local officials.

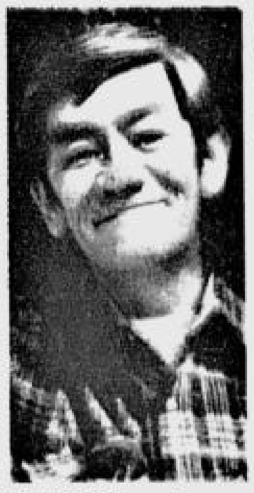
The Sammabal has expanded its venture to include a sea urchin conservation project and a mini-market in the village, where fishermen's wives can sell the day's catch.

The United Nations Development Program has also commissioned the Sammabal to help four villages in the town set up their mangrove reforestation and fish sanctuaries.

He did not climb Mt. Sinai; he built his own mountain

By Frank Cimatu
Baguio City

CLIMBING "Mt. Sinai" proved to be Steve Hamada's first and hardest job as a journalist. Sinai, of course, was his father, *Mang* Sinai Hamada, one of the best short story writers of his generation.



STEVE Hamada

In the 1930s, Sinai Hamada, a young Igorot studying at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City, wrote stories devoid of sentimentality and Christian moralism but all the warmth of *tapey* (rice wine) during cold Baguio nights. Also editor in chief of the Philippine Collegian, the UP student newspaper, he won awards, but critics didn't know how to pigeonhole him.

Then he left Manila and went back to Baguio to start a community newspaper, the Baguio Midland Courier. Sinai still wrote with Zen consciousness and samurai sword-sharp vision, no longer fiction but journalism pieces. And as the decades passed by, Midland became one of the top 10 community papers in the country.

It wasn't an auspicious time when Steve came to work with his father in the early 1970s. Martial law had just been declared and most of his friends were in hiding. And there was his Dad.

Ramon Dacawi, one of Steve's long-time friends, said many of Steve's early stories ended up in the trash can of his strict father but Steve persevered to climb "Mt. Sinai."

However, local journalism not only survived but thrived in Baguio during those so-called dark years with the Hamadas in Midland and Benjamin Salvosa (with the late Jose Nicolas "Peppot" Ilagan, Gerry Evangelista Jr. and Domci Cimatu) with the Baguio Gold Ore.

Steve's column then was titled "Fore and Aft," which, I only realized now, took the "be" from "before" and the "er" from "after" to form "beer." Much of the anecdotes I got from and by Steve were the results of drinking or the pursuit of drink.

Deadlines

Norris Figuerras, now finishing his doctorate in business administration in Japan and one of Steve's first correspondents, remembered buying gin at a funeral parlor for his boss. But inebriated or not, deadlines were inevitably met.

One time, everything was finished except for Steve's column and he was there asleep and embracing the typewriter. One of the printers finally woke him up and asked him about his column and all Steve did was roll out the paper from the typewriter and there it was.

In the 1980s, Steve left the Midland and started the Cordillera Post. Sinai followed his son to start the Post.

Many of my friends started their career in journalism with Steve. Photojournalist Andy Zapata said Steve was a "bullshit artist" and he would tell you if you were just puffing up your story.

But he always reminded us of our role as the voice of the people. "We may be a voice in the wilderness but we have a stronger voice and we belong to the wild," he said.

When Sinai died in 1992, the Post switched to magazine form to accommodate his short stories. The journalistic fire was waning in Steve even then and he was just going through the motions of bringing out the newspaper.

The Post eventually folded up and Steve had been thinking of coming out with a quarterly literary journal for Baguio writers or even a Sinai Hamada professorial chair for UP Baguio.

Steve ran twice for Baguio councilor and lost because he was too idealistic. I remembered joining in a village I never thought existed and Steve would sit there intently listening to the old women and telling them what to do.

We saw little of him in the past years except during wakes and gatherings of the Baguio Correspondents and Broadcasters Club.

He became a painter with the Tahong Bundok, doing mostly pointillist portraits of the Baguio he wanted it to be. His sister told us that his mother's wish was for Steve to return to writing and for the past month, he had been writing a column for the Baguio Skyland News.

American psychologist and philosopher William James said, "Is life worth living? It all depends on the liver." Steve's liver simply died on him on April 7, Holy Wednesday. He was 55.

It did not matter if he climbed Mt. Sinai. He simply built his own mountain.

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Quezon City

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

The **National Food Authority (NFA)** is inviting all eligible palay Farmers' Organizations (FOs) to participate in the distribution of rice under the **"INSTITUTIONALIZED FARMERS AS DISTRIBUTORS" (IFAD)** Program of the National Food Authority.

All interested parties are advised to accomplished a Letter of Intent (LOI), copies of which are available at the NFA Provincial Offices in their respective areas, to be submitted within ten (10) working days after the last day of publication. They should likewise meet the following qualifications:

- Must be operational and registered with any of the appropriate registering agencies as listed below:
  - Cooperative Development Authority (CDA)
  - Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)
  - Bureau of Labor Relations (BLR)
  - Bureau of Rural Workers (BRW)
  - National Irrigation Administration (NIA)
- Must be a member of a local farmers' action council or the Philippine Farmers' Advisory Board (PFAB).
- Must be a holder of NFA license as retailer/wholesaler and other incidental lines of activities, i.e., warehousing and transporting, if any.
- Must be a holder of Certificate of Operations and Good Standing issued by the appropriate registering agency, to be submitted to the concerned NFA Provincial Office.

Specifically, the NFA has allocated a total volume of some 1,000,000 bags of rice, 25% BKN, for this Program distributed among regions as follows:

Region	Allocation
NCR	4,700
Ilocos Region	93,200
Cagayan Valley	130,200
Central Luzon	139,900
Southern Tagalog	89,400
Bicol	68,100
Western Visayas	144,700
Central Visayas	21,700
Eastern Visayas	56,700
Western Mindanao	42,000
Northern Mindanao	47,400
Southern Mindanao	61,800
Central Mindanao	57,100
ARMM	43,100

For details, they may coordinate with the nearest NFA Office in their respective areas. For further inquiries, they may visit or contact NFA-DMO located at the 5th Flr., Matimyas Bldg., 101 E. Rodriguez Sr. Avenue, Quezon City with telephone nos. 712-1572, 712-1708 or 712-1564.

(Sgd.) **ATTY. ARTHUR C. YAP**
Administrator

(PDI - April 14, 15 & 16, 2004)

Republic of the Philippines
REGIONAL TRIAL COURT
NATIONAL CAPITAL JUDICIAL REGION
BRANCH 204
MUNTINLUPA CITY

IN THE MATTER OF PETITION FOR INVOLUNTARY INSOLVENCY.
SPOUSES ROSARIO A. BALADJAY,
SATURNINO BALADJAY
Debtors,

SP. PROC. CASE NO. 03-026

ANNE MARIE CABALLERO, ET. AL.,
Petitioners.
ROMEO G. MANGALINO, ET. AL.,
Intervenors.
x----------------------------------x

ORDER

The Court received a Manifestation and Compliance from Atty. Elizabeth Padron nominating Ms. Leila Ira of Block 32, Lot 9 La Paz Homes II, Trece Martires City, Cavite as their receiver. Said Compliance was filed pursuant to the Order of this Court dated November 25, 2003.

WHEREFORE, Dr. Rafael Manalo and Leila Ira are appointed as Joint Receivers. Both receivers shall assume all the duties and responsibilities of the same upon filing of their Oath of Office with this Court.

Let the notice of this Order be served personally by the Process Server or Sheriff of this Court to the parties and counsels concerned.

SO ORDERED.

City of Muntinlupa, December 2, 2003.

(Sgd.) JUANITA T. GUERRERO
Judge

NOTICE OF APPOINTMENT AS JOINT RECEIVERS

Notice is hereby being CONVEYED TO THE PUBLIC that LEILA I. IRA and Dr. RAFAEL A. MANALO, were appointed as RECEIVERS of the properties and interest of the sps. SATURNINO and ROSARIO BALADJAY. MULTITEL INT'L HOLDINGS INC., MULTINATIONAL TELECOM INVESTORS CORPORATION, RAB REALTY INC., etc., by the Regional Trial Court of Muntinlupa City, Br. 204 thereof, in SP PROC. CASE NO. 03-026 entitled "IN THE MATTER OF PETITION FOR INVOLUNTARY INSOLVENCY, Sps. ROSARIO BALADJAY and SATURNINO BALADJAY, ET AL., Debtors, ANNE MARIE CABALLERO, ET AL., Petitioners," last December 2, 2003, and took THEIR oath of office on December 3 and 11, 2003, respectively. Henceforth, be it known that their appointment excludes all other "RECEIVERS" appointed by other fora as such constitute forum shopping and/or duplicitous appointment contrary to Act. no. 1956 or the Insolvency Law.

(PDI–April 14, 2004)

TransCo
National Transmission Corporation

INVITATION TO BID
FOR THE SALE OF UNSERVICEABLE/SCRAP ALUMINUM CONDUCTORS (ACSR)
("AS IS WHERE IS")

DATE & TIME OF BIDDING : April 23, 2004 at 10:00 AM
PRE-BIDDING CONFERENCE : April 16, 2004 at 2:00 PM

The National Transmission Corporation, South Luzon O&M invites interested parties to bid on various unserviceable/scrap ACSR listed below.

LOT#	Description of Unserviceable Item	Location	Est. Qty	Unit Price	Minimum Bid
1	Unserviceable/scrap ACSR, with core 795 MCM	Batangas S/S	10 tons	P90.00/kg	P900,000.00
2	Unserviceable/scrap ACSR, with core, various sizes	Dasmariñas S/S	15 tons	P90.00/kg	P1,350,000.00
3	Unserviceable/scrap ACSR 795 & 336.4 MCM Without Core –	Tayabas S/S	2.5 tons	P97.00/kg	P242,500.00
4	With Core –	Tayabas S/S	77.5 tons	P90.00/kg	P6,975,000.00
5	With Core –	EHV Kalayaan	20 tons	P90.00/kg	P1,800,000.00
6	Unserviceable/scrap ACSR, with core 795 MCM	Naga S/S	10 tons	P90.00/kg	P900,000.00

NOTE: Actual weighing shall be conducted during withdrawal

Bids in the prescribed form shall be enclosed in two sealed envelopes and shall be received until 10:00 AM, April 23, 2004 afterwhich said bids shall be opened in the presence of attending bidders. No bids shall be received after said time & date. All bids must be submitted at the Bidding Room, Transco – SL O&M Regional Office, San Vicente, Biñan, Laguna with the following:

First Envelope
1. Bidder's Bond in the form of Cash, Manager's Check equivalent to 10% of total bid price.
2. Latest Income Tax Return (CY 2003) stamped/receipt by the BIR

Second Envelope:
1. Bid Offer in the Transco prescribed form.

Additional information such as Request for Inspection and Bid Form may be obtained starting April 15, 2004 from Administration-Warehouse/MMS Office with Telephone No. (02) 520-8213. Payment of the prescribed form and other particulars is P100.00 per set which is not refundable.

The Corporation reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive formalities found therein and accept offers most advantageous to TRANSCO.

(Sgd.) R.D. RAMAS

(PDI–April 14, 2004)

WHAT THE 2004 ELECTIONS IS ALL ABOUT

We're No. 4!

It took GMA less than 3 years to move
us up from No. 11 to No.4 in the graft list

RP ranks 4th most corrupt in Asia

Perception of corruption in the incumbent government is apparently getting worse as the Philippines has been rated the fourth most corrupt country in Asia, garnering 8.33 points in 2004 compared to a rating of 7.67 in 2003.

A survey of foreign businessmen showed Indonesia as the most corrupt in the region for the third year running, followed by India and Vietnam.

Singapore was seen as the least corrupt among 12 countries and territories in the region, according to the study conducted by Hong Kong based Political & Economic Risk Consultancy Ltd. Perceptions of corruption improved in eight of the 12 Asian areas covered last year, the survey report said.

"Some of the biggest improvements have been registered in countries like China and Thailand which have long had particularly poor reputations," it added.

Perceptions in the three worst rated countries for corruption – Vietnam, India and Indonesia – were slightly better this year than last, the report showed.

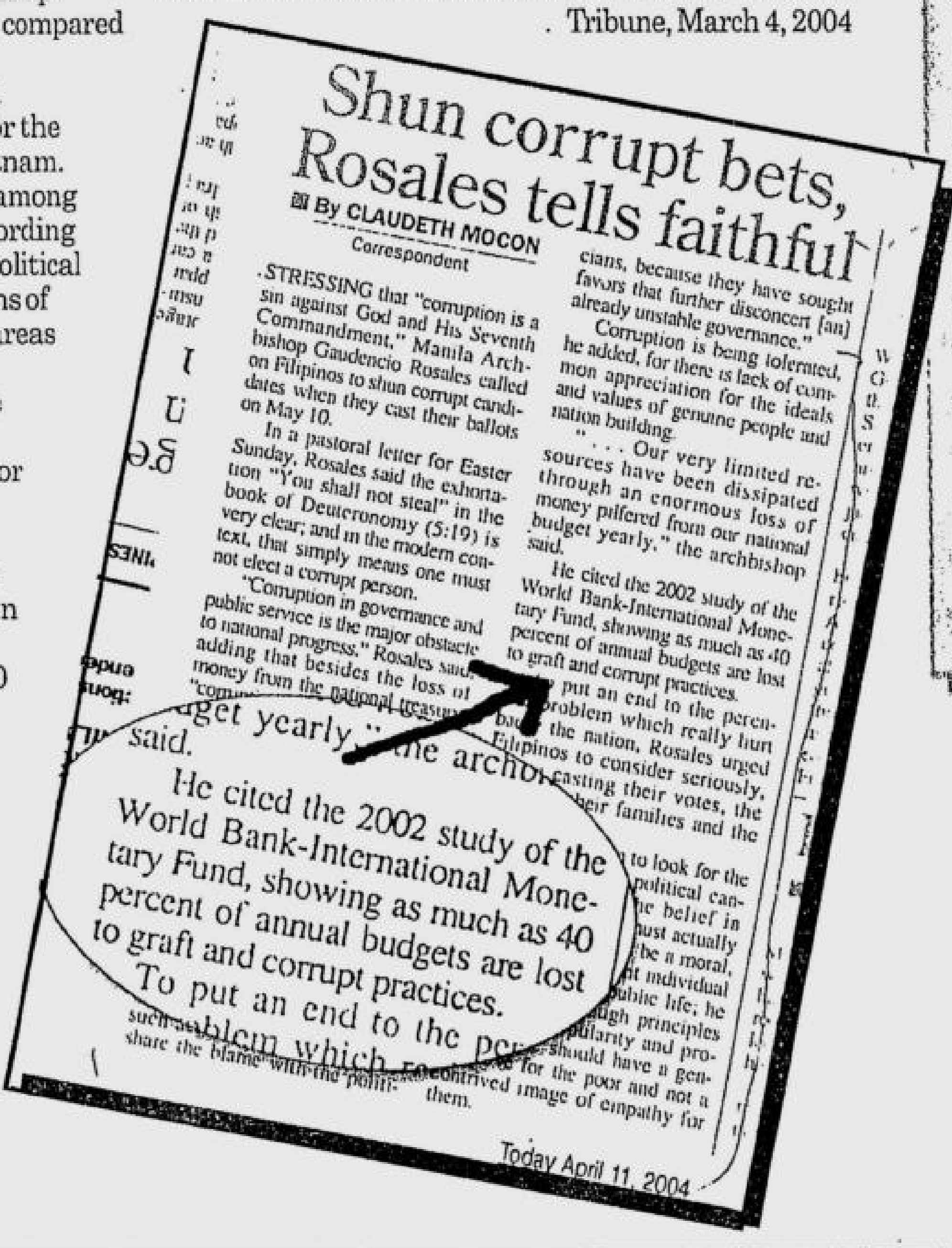
The latest survey polled more than 1,000 expatriate businessmen working in Asia in January and February.

They were asked to provide ratings on scale from zero to 10, with the latter being the most corrupt.

Bangladesh, which has been rated the world's most corrupt country for three years in a row by Transparency International, was not included in the survey.

On scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the most corrupt, Indonesia roped home with the worst grade of 9.25, followed by India (8.9), Vietnam (8.67), the Philippines (8.33), Thailand, Malaysia and China (7.33), South Korea (6.67), Taiwan (6.1), Hong Kong (3.6), Japan (3.5) and Singapore (0.5). – *Reuters*

Tribune, March 4, 2004



Shun corrupt bets, Rosales tells faithful

By CLAUDETH MOCON
Correspondent

STRESSING that "corruption is a sin against God and His Seventh Commandment," Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales called on Filipinos to shun corrupt candidates when they cast their ballots on May 10.

In a pastoral letter for Easter Sunday, Rosales said the exhortation "You shall not steal" in the book of Deuteronomy (5:19) is very clear; and in the modern context, that simply means one must not elect a corrupt person.

"Corruption in governance and public service is the major obstacle to national progress," Rosales said, adding that besides the loss of money from the national treasury, "corru[illegible]

[illegible] share the blame with the politicians, because they have sought favors that further disconcert [an] already unstable governance."

Corruption is being tolerated, he added, for there is lack of common appreciation for the ideals and values of genuine people and nation building.

". . . Our very limited resources have been dissipated through an enormous loss of money pilfered from our national budget yearly," the archbishop said.

He cited the 2002 study of the World Bank-International Monetary Fund, showing as much as 40 percent of annual budgets are lost to graft and corrupt practices.

To put an end to the perennial problem which really hurt the nation, Rosales urged Filipinos to consider seriously, casting their votes, the [illegible] their families and the [illegible] to look for the [illegible] political can[illegible] belief in [illegible] must actually [illegible] be a moral, [illegible] individual [illegible] public life; he [illegible] principles [illegible] popularity and pro[illegible] should have a gen[illegible] for the poor and not a contrived image of empathy for them.

get yearly," the archbishop said.

He cited the 2002 study of the World Bank-International Monetary Fund, showing as much as 40 percent of annual budgets are lost to graft and corrupt practices.

To put an end to the per[illegible] problem which

Today April 11, 2004

Corruption in Asia 2004

(on a scale of zero to 10):	Grade
Indonesia	9.25
India	8.9
Vietnam	8.67
Philippines	8.33
Thailand, Malaysia China	7.33
South Korea	6.67
Taiwan	6.1
Hong Kong	3.6
Japan	3.5
Singapore	0.5

Malaya March 17, 2004

Now she wants another
6 years to make us

NUMERO UNO!

To Jose Pidal et al:

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!

3 YEARS IS ENOUGH!

3 YEARS IS ENOUGH COALITION!

Paid Advertisement

Ailing Roco leaves for US to seek medical treatment

From page A1

leadership on the one hand and honest and decent government on the other, I will fight on," said Roco, 62. It was the first time he was seen in public after the Holy Week.

He said Aquino, the other Alyansa candidates and political strategist Jaime Galvez-Tan would press ahead with the campaign "as though I were here."

But the promise did not completely douse rumors that he was pulling out of the presidential race. *(See story on Page A1, col. 2.)*

ROCO'S Senate slate vows to stay together, to stand solidly behind him and continue the campaign in his absence. From left, Jay Sonza, Frank Chavez, Bong Coo, vice presidential candidate Hermie Aquino, Nick Gatmaytan and "Batas" Mauricio. ERIK ARAZAS

Lito O's doubts

His own ally, former Cebu Gov. Emilio "Lito" Osmeña, expressed doubt that he would pursue his candidacy with his decision to seek treatment in the United States.

Roco, however, reiterated over GMA 7's early-evening newscast that the campaign would continue. He also denied that he was being "courted" by Malacañang to withdraw his candidacy and support President Macapagal-Arroyo's own.

Roco said at the press conference he was to leave last night for the United States for treatment of the condition that his doctors had assured him was "not life-threatening."

"Nor will it prevent me from fulfilling my vision for the country," he said, adding that he expected "to return healthy and strong to continue the fight."

Roco's staff said early last night that he was to take an 11:25 p.m. flight on Continental Airlines.

"I have decided to follow my doctors' advice so that I can continue to serve the people," Roco said. "The pain I'm enduring cannot compare to the sufferings of our people. The two things to remember: I will not die on you and I will continue fighting, and if I die I will continue fighting with your help. The Philippines needs a choice. We will be there."

Dejection

A mood of dejection pervaded the packed conference room after Roco read his prepared statement and members of the Aksyon Kabataan sang Rivermaya's "Awit ng Kabataan" as well as Alyansa's jingles.

Campaign media coordinator Elvira Liwanag was later seen breaking into tears.

"Of course, no one wants this to happen. No presidential campaign will want its standard-bearer to have to leave for medical treatment during the homestretch," Mariano said, adding:

"But at the same time, your support for Roco transcends his mere presence. Our reasons for supporting him have not changed. We will continue to fight. And we're hoping that despite his absence, people will begin to see how committed his supporters are."

But Roco's senatorial candidates put up a brave front.

Melanio "Batas" Mauricio said the ticket might even capitalize on Roco's absence to draw sympathy votes.

"Somebody will pitch in for him, but the campaign will go ahead, and we intend to capitalize on the emotional impact that this will have ... We know that people will appreciate the fact that even if he's sick, he continues to fight. And we will bring this fight to the people," Mauricio said.

Former Solicitor General Frank Chavez said the ticket had "nothing to fear" as long as the reasons for Roco's departure were fully explained.

"The people will understand that when it comes to ... health, it should take preference because there is no president that can serve when he's no longer healthy. This has to be resolved first," he told the INQUIRER.

All systems go

It will be "all systems go," Chavez said. "The candidates will be traveling and campaigning together. We stand solid as a group. We stand by his reason. The fight continues. Nothing has changed except for this medical attendance that he has to get."

Chavez recalled noticing that Roco had difficulty getting up during a Palm Sunday Mass in Mariveles, Bulacan.

"I knew he was in pain," Chavez said. "This was his body telling him that he needs medical attention. If by postponing it, it further jeopardizes his health, that will not [do] him any good. The sooner this is attended to, the better, the sooner for him to continue the fight, as he vowed in front of all of us."

Broadcaster Jay Sonza said that while rival camps would make much of Roco's departure, it would spur the Alyansa to campaign more vigorously: "We expect the opposition to play on this, but for us, this will drive us to work harder and get the people to rally behind the agenda of hope ... We have no other mission."

Minutes after Roco's announcement, the other senatorial candidates—Nicanor Gatmaytan, Bong Coo, Edno Joson and Perfecto Yasay Jr.—left.

Not politics

Responding to questions, Roco said his absence should not be interpreted as a withdrawal from the presidential race.

When asked whether the administration could construe his departure as a graceful exit, he said: "Speculative. The administration will say anything ... I don't think we can take their word."

He pointed out that his worsening physical condition, and not politics, was behind his decision.

But he conceded that his absence would have an impact on his candidacy: "Yes, it might. It might make us win, it might make us lose. But that is what campaigns are all about. I cannot say. It is up to the Filipino people to make a judgment. All acts, all incidents can affect results."

Roco blamed his condition on the out-of-town campaign sorties that he and the Alyansa ticket had been making.

In particular, he cited the long land trips in Samar, Negros Island, Zamboanga del Sur and Norte, and Cagayan, Isabela and Nueva Vizcaya.

He said the clincher was the trip of almost 600 km from Dipolog City in Zamboanga del Norte to Ipil in Zamboanga del Sur, and the 400-km motorcade from Dumaguete City in Negros Oriental to Bacolod City in Negros Occidental.

He also said the heat aggravated the pain and caused him to lose his appetite.

Osmeña, De Villa

But Roco said he had yet to discuss his decision to seek treatment abroad with his major allies, including former Executive Secretary Renato de Villa of Reporma and Lito Osmeña of Promdi.

"Maybe I'll see De Villa soon enough, but I imagine they're monitoring me, and I hope they understand and they support [me]," he said. "I have no doubt, however, that their hearts are with us, and they'll continue fighting with us."

In Cebu City, Osmeña said that during a meeting with Roco in Bohol last week, the latter talked about his health problem.

He said he noticed that Roco was in pain and very pale at that time, and he advised the latter to see a doctor.

But Osmeña admitted that it would be difficult for Roco to win the presidential race with his decision to leave barely a month before the elections.

"I am sure that [he will have some difficulty]," Osmeña said. "We have to face the reality ... and I don't know [if he will continue with his candidacy]. My advice to him would be 'self comes first.'"

Talk of withdrawal

Osmeña said he and Roco discussed the latter's possible withdrawal from the race during their talk last week.

But he refused to elaborate, saying: "I do not feel I am at liberty to divulge. I think it should all come from [Roco]."

Osmeña said that with Roco's decision to go abroad, Alyansa members should draw up a collective plan on how to pursue the campaign.

But he said his local candidates in Cebu headed by Fermin Celestial, who is running for vice governor, could hold their own without the Manila candidates.

Osmeña's Promdi and De Villa's Reporma, along with Roco's Aksyon Demokratiko, make up the Alyansa ng Pag-asa.

Worthy opponent

Ms Macapagal was meeting with campaign supporters and a group of Nationalist People's Coalition congressmen in Malacañang at the time of Roco's press conference.

Her spokesperson, Ignacio Bunye, later issued this statement: "The President is concerned about Senator Roco's health. She wishes him well."

Bunye later told reporters that Ms Macapagal would try to get in touch with Roco "at the earliest possible time."

Asked if the President expected Roco to withdraw from the race, and if she would ask him to join forces with her, Bunye said: "We have always considered Senator Roco a worthy opponent, and that's as far as we'll go right now. As we said, we are concerned about his health."

Asked if the President also considered Roco an ally, Bunye said: "You know, in politics there's nothing impossible."

When asked if he thought Roco was out of the race, Ms Macapagal's campaign manager Gabriel Claudio said: "We don't want to be presumptuous, but one cannot expect to get support and votes by not being around to personally campaign."

Batanes Rep. Florencio Abad, president of the Liberal Party, said Roco's departure from the campaign scene could revive negotiations for his rejoining Ms Macapagal.

Abad and Senate President Franklin Drilon, LP chair, had earlier tried to negotiate a merging of forces.

"This development will bring that back to motion. That's the normal thing to do," Abad said in a phone interview. "But we will try to find out first the real situation. If it's an indication that it will eventually lead to an openness to sit down, we'll grab that opportunity for GMA."

Abad also said Roco's absence and concerns about his health could "weaken his position further," considering that his ratings in the surveys had not improved.

Prayers

The other presidential candidates expressed good wishes for Roco.

Evangelist Bro. Eddie Villanueva, who was to meet with Roco yesterday to pray with and for the latter, called on the people to pray for his health.

He added: "My family and I, as well as the whole Bangon Pilipinas party, are praying for former Sen. Raul Roco's speedy and complete recovery from his medical condition."

Said Fernando Poe Jr., Ms Macapagal's closest rival: "I hope he's going to be all right. I hope [his ailment is] very minor."

Sen. Panfilo Lacson said: "I wish him a speedy recovery. I sincerely wish him well." *With reports from Juliet Labog-Javellana, Norman Bordadora, Carlito Pablo and Blanche S. Rivera in Manila; Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Raul had prostate surgery in 1996

From page A1

campaign," he told the INQUIRER.

He pointed out that he was among the first to rise every morning during the 14-hour campaign sorties of the Alyansa ng Pag-Asa: "*Walang makasabay sa akin* (No one could keep up with me)."

"And before we had our daily press conferences, I would have already shaken hands with about a thousand people."

Something goes wrong

But something went wrong on March 25.

Roco recalled feeling pain in his lower back while campaigning in the towns of Ipil and Naga in Zamboanga Sibugay. *(See banner story on Page A1.)*

"I thought my muscles were just swollen, so I transferred to another car, but the pain did not go away," he said.

Unperturbed, he pushed through with the campaign schedule, taking a flight back to Manila on March 26 to appear on a TV show. The next day, he flew to Dumaguete City to catch up with the slate campaigning in Negros.

Two days later, he was with his team in Rizal before proceeding to Pampanga and Bataan.

Roco said he retreated to his rest house on Panglao Island in Bohol during the Holy Week "to allow my body to recover."

Believing in seawater therapy, he went snorkeling twice.

Asked why he was so quiet on Thursday morning while having breakfast with reporters, he said: "I was in pain."

The pain persisted, so he returned to Manila on Friday, two days ahead of schedule.

Full of life

Inday Santiago, Roco's running mate in the 1998 presidential elections and now a coordinator of Women for Roco in Mindanao, said she never heard the 62-year-old candidate fret over some ailment in recent sorties.

"When I escorted him and Hermie [Aquino, Roco's running mate] through Davao in February, he was the usual Raul Roco of 1998. He was still full of life," Santiago said in a phone interview.

When they barnstormed the countryside in 1998, Roco sometimes caught a cold or complained of a toothache, Santiago recalled.

Regular exercise

"Otherwise, he was full of energy. He walked very fast, and I always ran to catch up with him," she said.

In a statement, Roco said he had exercised regularly to keep himself healthy.

Until he started feeling pain in his back, he was often heard egging on the Alyansa candidates at the start of their provincial sorties: "Let's go, guys!"

He walked so briskly inside public markets that the rest of the ticket had to hurry to keep pace.

But on Palm Sunday in Balanga City, Bataan, where some noticed that Roco had difficulty walking, he bemoaned why the press briefing had to be moved from the eatery inside a public market, where the ticket had their lunch, to a police precinct outside.

"He was really hurting," one of his staff members said.

Rumors

Roco's brother, Camarines Sur Rep. Sulpicio Roco Jr., confirmed to the INQUIRER that the Alyansa standard-bearer's health problem was largely caused by the campaign sorties.

He said his brother had no option but to submit to medical treatment because not doing so could result in permanent damage.

But Sulpicio said the required treatment would not deter his brother from continuing his quest for the presidency.

As early as December 2002, Roco had been working out in the gym in preparation for the 2004 elections.

Sulpicio told the INQUIRER then that his brother was getting in shape for a campaign certain to be "physically exhausting."

At the time, rumors were circulating to the effect that the candidate was being plagued by "failing health." *With a report from Juan Escandor Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

'De facto withdrawal' boosts GMA, pressures rivals to unite

From page A1

ping out of the presidential race and throwing his support behind Ms Macapagal if only to prevent a high school dropout with no political experience—Poe—from winning the presidency.

Roco, his party mates and his campaign handlers vigorously denied then that he was abandoning the race.

Despite his repeated declarations yesterday that "I will fight on," Roco is now out of it for all practical purposes.

Gatmaitan, president of the think-tank Political Economy Applied Research (PEAR) Foundation, said he doubted Roco could still mount an effective campaign even if he was able to return from the US soon.

"While not life threatening, it's going to be potentially debilitating," Gatmaitan said of Roco's health condition. "I guess doctors will advise him to rest so it will mean no campaign for him."

"It's the end of the road."

Scramble begins

With Roco now effectively in the shadows, the scramble begins for his main constituents—the horde of young, college-educated voters and his followers in his native and vote-rich Bicol region.

Their support propelled the former senator to a strong third place in the 1998 polls, behind the steamroller named Joseph Estrada and House Speaker Jose de Venecia.

Analysts and pollsters agreed the dramatic change in the political equation would only benefit Ms Macapagal.

Mahar Mangahas of the Social Weather Stations (SWS) said last week that if Roco dropped out of the race, the President would likely get 5.6 percent of his voters, while Poe would get 4.3 percent.

This would be enough for Ms Macapagal to overhaul Poe's razor-thin edge of 0.6 percent in approval ratings and even inch ahead of the actor, although by an equally slim lead of 0.7 percent, Mangahas said.

At the time, SWS had Poe holding a fragile lead over the President in the approval ratings.

A fraction of a percent in a narrow electoral contest could spell the difference between victory and defeat.

Differences will show

Rocamora also said Roco's absence from the political stage could only be to Ms Macapagal's advantage.

"It will emphasize the difference between GMA and FPJ," Rocamora told the INQUIRER. "*Lilitaw ang* difference between them in terms of their qualifications."

"For all intents and purposes, it has been a question of Gloria versus FPJ. But as long as Roco was there, people had the illusion that there were more than two choices ... Now it will work considerably in favor of Gloria."

Wallace said there was little doubt that Ms Macapagal would gain from Roco's absence.

"The major constituents of Mr. Roco are the young, educated people who do not know FPJ and do not have the adoration for him that their parents have," Wallace said. "So they are going to lean much more likely towards someone who is educated, like them."

Such a situation, he said, would be welcomed by foreign business, which has adopted a wait-and-see posture ahead of the elections and expressed concern about the prospects of the country being ruled again by a movie actor.

"We may well see a strengthening of the market," Wallace added. "I think this will bring some reassurance to the business community."

Analysts agreed that Roco's fading from the scene posed a critical question of political survival to Poe and to independent candidate Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson.

'Unite or lose'

"This development could possibly hasten the unification talks between them (Poe and Lacson)," Gatmaitan said.

"But I don't know if they will agree."

Gatmaitan said he believed that "right now there is a more than 50-50 chance" that Poe and Lacson would join forces to try and beat the President.

"The logic of the situation simply dictates that they must unite ... But it will still be a close race."

Wallace and Rocamora shared the same view.

"They will have to talk much more seriously now about unification," said Wallace. "So far, the trend line has been flat for Poe, about 30 percent, and rising for Ms Macapagal."

The choice for Poe and Lacson, said the Australian businessman who has been in the country for 30 years and seen the tragedy and comedy of its politics, is simple: "Unite or lose."

Save water, MWSS tells Metro folk

By Tina Santos

DON'T panic. Save water.

That was the appeal of Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) administrator Orlando Hondrade to Metro Manila residents as the water level at Angat Dam continued to recede beyond the critical level.

"People should stay calm. There should be no cause for alarm," Hondrade said over radio dzBB, adding that there was enough supply to provide for 97 percent of Metro Manila's water needs."

However, Hondrade urged residents to conserve water.

Don't waste water

"Let's all do our share. Please make sure you don't waste water," he appealed to the public.

The water level at the dam stood at 179.92 meters yesterday afternoon, down from Monday's 180.15 meters.

To ensure water supply to the metropolis, the water allocation for irrigation in Central Luzon farmlands, particularly in Bulacan and Pampanga, was cut yesterday.

Earlier, water officials assured Metro Manila residents that the water supply would remain steady and there would be no additional cutbacks in the water distributed to households.

The supply of water to Metro Manila households was reduced by 5 percent in December.

"We have no plans to further cut back the water supply," MWSS officials said.

Farming not affected

Gloria Carillo, chief of the Department of Agriculture (DA) office in Bulacan, downplayed the effects of the water cut on farmers.

She said many of the farmers already stopped planting as early as February.

"There will be very few areas in the province that will be affected by the cut of water irrigation needs," Carillo said. *With Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

WARNING TO CAR OWNERS

MMDA to go after banned lights

By Margaux Ortiz

THE METROPOLITAN Manila Development Authority (MMDA) has seen the light—the unauthorized variety, that is—and is not amused.

Worse, it will be apprehending and slapping a P500 fine on car owners who have installed prohibited lighting devices on their vehicles in violation of rules set by the Land Transportation Office (LTO).

Traffic Operations Center Director Angelito Vergel de Dios said an LTO memorandum circular dated March 23, 1999, banned "dazzling headlights, broken taillights, broken taillight lens, and unauthorized rear/side/spot white or neon lights of any colors" on vehicles that use Metro Manila's roads.

Distraction

"Despite the order," Vergel de Dios noted, "vehicles sporting additional lighting devices are being tolerated." He explained that these distract pedestrians and other motorists and could lead to accidents.

Upon apprehension, unauthorized lighting devices on vehicles will be immediately confiscated and the motorist fined.

If a motorist refuses to have a device confiscated, his or her vehicle will be impounded and the illegal accessory removed. The vehicle will be released afterwards.

Naktf help

The MMDA official said they would propose to National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force chief Angelo Reyes the strict implementation of the ban on unauthorized blinkers and sirens.

Vergel de Dios said the emergency devices were often used by unscrupulous and abusive enforcers and officials.

He added that cars with illegal sirens and blinkers could be used as getaway vehicles by criminals.

SUMMER FLOOD
Metro Manila residents seeking to beat the summer heat swamp the beach of Pulo island in Manila Bay off Parañaque City. The man-made island is an alternative venue for people who cannot go to beaches in Cavite or Batangas. ERIK ARAZAS

NCRPO chief hit for 'kotong' tag

By Leila B. Salaverria

TRAFFIC policemen in Manila have become demoralized by the statements of National Capital Region Police Office Director Ricardo de Leon on mulcting cops, a police organization has said.

In a position paper, the Manila's Finest Brotherhood Association, Inc. (MFBAI), said De Leon's pronouncements tended to smear the image of all traffic policemen, even those who are faithfully doing their jobs.

MFBAI's paper added that the move of De Leon deputizing public transport groups in the anti-*kotong* drive could drive a wedge between lawmen and public utility drivers.

Earlier, De Leon was quoted as saying that there was rampant extortion by law enforcers in Manila and that in order to curb this, the NCRPO was deputizing transport groups to report the activities of corrupt policemen.

The group said in the position paper that de Leon's statement contained "bare allegations" and that the deputization of transport groups was all for show.

"But why the deputization when anybody can report police misconduct? Obviously, in order to gain media mileage," the paper read.

The MFBAI suggested that instead of launching the antagonistic drive against traffic policemen, the NCRPO director should conduct dialogues where problems and issues can be discussed.

In an interview, MFBAI vice president SPO2 Virgo Villareal said public statements of police officials about *kotong* cops were hurting the morale and image of policemen, especially those trying to do a decent job.

Gun ban nets 382 violators

By Edson Tandoc Jr.

LESS than a month before the elections, the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) has arrested 382 persons for violating the Commission on Elections ban on deadly weapons.

Of those arrested, 12 were members of the Armed Forces, while 9 were policemen, according to NCRPO records.

Only some of the violators were arrested at the Comelec checkpoints set up all over the metropolis. Most were arrested for other offenses and were later found and charged for carrying guns without the necessary Comelec permit.

The NCRPO has also confiscated 94 high-power firearms, 186 small-caliber guns and 134 bladed weapons.

The ban on deadly weapons in public places took effect on Dec. 15, 2003, and will remain until June 9.

Aside from the election season, the NCRPO has also stepped up security measures in the metropolis amid renewed threats of terrorism in the country.

Burglars pick wrong person to keep loot

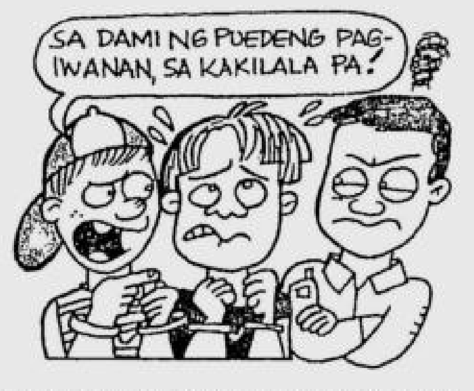
By Luige del Puerto

THE POLICE arrested two theft suspects, including a 15-year-old boy, after the man to whom they entrusted their loot with turned them in to the police.

The suspects, Anthony Reyes, 18, of Aglipay Street, Barangay Old Zaniga, and his young accomplice, left a Rolex watch and a Nokia 3210 to their neighbor, Edwin Jiongco, 21, at dawn Monday.

Jiongco took the watch and cellphone but discovered these were stolen when the owner of the phone sent a text message.

What made matters worse for the suspects was that the owner of the valuables turned out to be a close relative of his mother, the police said.


SA DAMI NG PUEDENG PAG-IWANAN, SA KAKILALA PA!

Together with his mother, Jiongco returned the phone to Alejandro Vicencio, 39, a businessman and resident of 100 C. De Venecia Street, also in Old Zaniga.

The discovery later led to the arrest of the suspects.

Investigation revealed that the suspects scaled the wall of Vicencio's home and entered through the terrace at about 2 a.m.

While looking for valuables, Vicencio's wife was roused from sleep, forcing the suspects to flee but not after leaving behind a pair of slippers, a black shirt and a face towel.

When initially questioned by barangay officials, Reyes admitted that the slippers, the black shirt and the face towel were his.

METROBRIEFS

Yunos prosecutors unfazed

APART from the change in venue and in the plea of Light Rail Transit bombing accused Muklis Yunos, the government's strategy remains the same. State Prosecutor Peter Ong said they were not bothered by the transfer of the bombing case to a family court. He added that they would be presenting the same set of evidence against Yunos. *Tarra Quismundo*

Pasig 'incursion' defended

THE OPERATION in Pasig City last week for which six policemen from the Northern Police District have been put under preventive suspension was a "legitimate police operation which was properly coordinated," a report from the district anti-illegal drugs task force said. However, NPD Director Marcelino Franco and District Anti-Illegal Drugs Task Force chief Rafael Santiago refused to comment on the matter. *Edson Tandoc Jr.*

Korean arrested

KOREAN Oh Gyu Il, a 49-year-old businessman and a native of Seoul, was arrested by the National Bureau of Investigation in Ermita, Manila, after his government sought assistance for his apprehension. The Korean is reportedly wanted in his country for an economic crime. *Leila Salaverria*

Journalists' congress

THE NATIONAL Union of Journalists in the Philippines will tackle media killings and other concerns of journalists during its 4th National Congress on April 15. Christopher Warren, president of the Australia-based International Federation of Journalists, will speak at the gathering to be held at the Ramon Magsaysay Hall of the Social Security System in Quezon City.

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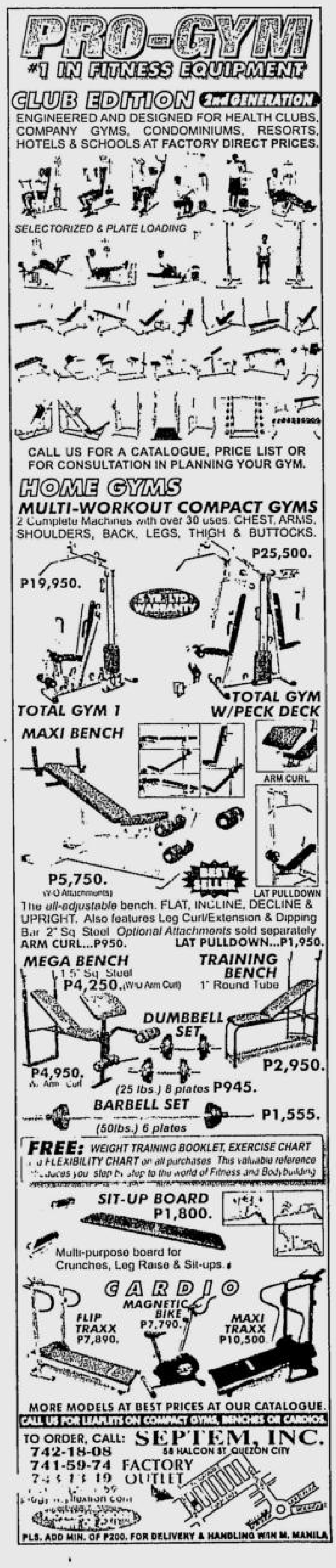
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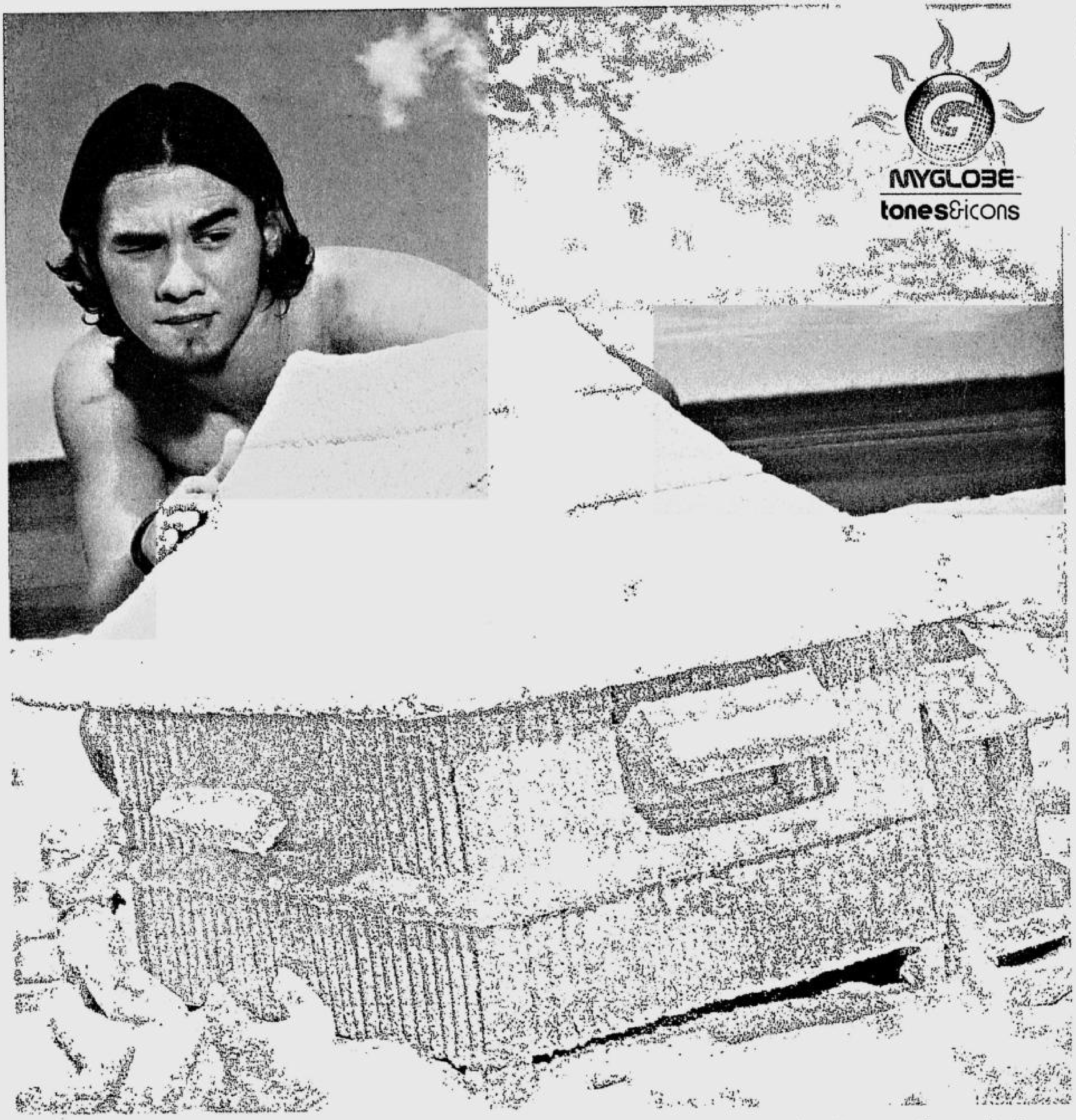

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Garbage crisis scenario junked

By Margaux Ortiz and Tarra Quismundo

THE REAL garbage crisis will take place after two years, according to Metro Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando.

Fernando made the statement yesterday in response to the assessment made recently by the Asian Development Bank that warned of a stinking future for the capital unless local government units do something and exercise will power on recycling efforts and sanitary landfill construction.

"Right now, the garbage situation in Metro Manila is under control," Fernando said in a telephone interview.

But he said the dump sites used for the capital's garbage are "exhaustible resources which will expire after two years."

"That is why we are currently on the hunt for possible controlled dump sites which could host Metro Manila's garbage after the present sites are filled," Fernando said.

He added there was no need for Metro Manila residents to panic over a "looming garbage crisis."

Fernando appealed again to the public to refrain from throwing their garbage in the waterways and public areas and to follow the door-to-door garbage collection policy of the MMDA and local government units.

Fernando also stressed that segregation at the household level should be conducted.

Better light

Meanwhile, Manila's Department of Public Services (DPS) sees the garbage crisis scenario in a better light.

"Though it is never fixed, our garbage volume lessens every year," said DPS operations division officer-in-charge Annie Parales yesterday.

The DPS is the city government's unit tasked to collect garbage. It also ensures that the city's streets and roads are swept clean and clear of any obstruction.

Parales noted a decline in the daily average of garbage collected in the Manila. And the department expects a further decline once waste segregation is more widely practiced.

Last year, daily garbage collected throughout the city averaged 5,620 cubic meters, down 17 percent from the daily collection of 6,712 cubic meters in 2002.

Tanong ng Bayan
INQ TV
Ngayong Alas-10 Ng Gabi

Si FPJ, Taray King nga ba?

Nang nagalit si FPJ kay TV reporter Sandra Aguinaldo, habang kumakampanya sa may Iloilo, umikot na naman ang mga lumang kuwento. Si Da King raw, talagang mainitin ang ulo, madaling magalit, nagtatanim ng sama ng loob. Totoo nga ba? Alamin, mamayang alas-10 ng gabi, sa ABC. (May replay bukas, alas-8 ng umaga.)

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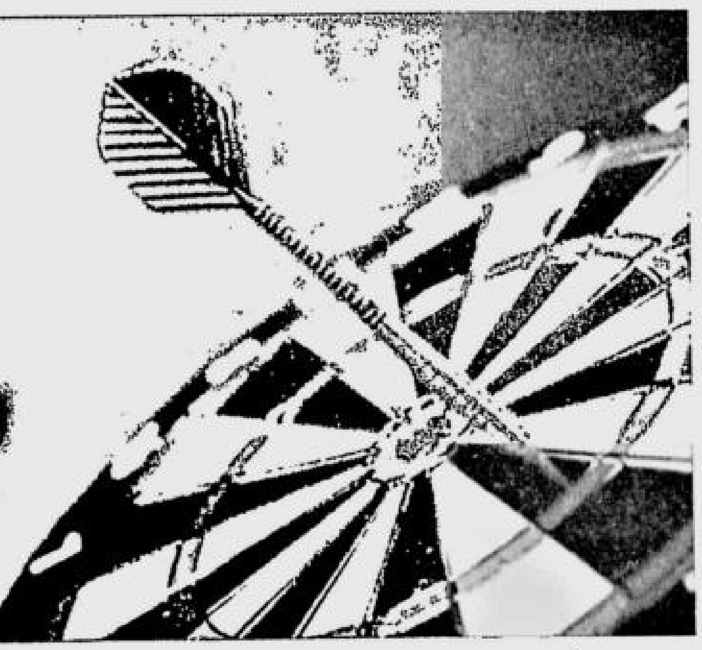

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BASKETBALL: NBA-Pistons vs Raptors; 7 a.m. (r-8 p.m.); Solar Sports—Central Division rivals Detroit and Toronto meet for the final time in the regular season.

NBA Greatest Games-Celtics vs Hawks, Game 6, 1988 Eastern Semifinals; 12 noon; Solar Sports—Boston's Larry Bird and Atlanta's Dominque Wilkins engage in a scoring duel for the ages.

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

Compiled by L. Manguiat

SPORTS

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Champ Quirimit focused on job ahead

PDI PHOTO

QUIRIMIT sets out as top favorite.

By Marc Anthony Reyes

SORSOGON—Bad omen or just a snag?

Either way, Arnel Quirimit isn't worried.

The Air 21 Tour Pilipinas 2004 defending champion thought he lost his plane ticket at the Naia Centennial Terminal 2 yesterday morning and frantically searched through his hand-carried baggage for it.

The commotion alarmed Tour executive director Mar Mendoza and caused a minor traffic at the departure area's X-ray machine.

Then Quirimit realized he had already checked in.

"I'm not scared of anything or anyone here," said the champ, who celebrated his 29th birthday on Good Friday, in Filipino. "And I don't believe in superstition."

Quirimit caught up with the rest of the cyclists here only yesterday morning, barely rested after a competition last weekend in Japan where he finished 16th overall.

He arrived with three other Tour veterans, including 1998 Tour winner Warren Davadilla, who wound up 13th in the event and also missed slots to the Athens Olympics.

"It was very cold there, I would have fared better," Quirimit said.

The weather in this steamy seaside city, near the town of Donsol, playground of the world-famous whale shark or *butanding*, certainly favors the celebrated rider from Pozzorubio, Pangasinan.

But there is one man out to foil his back-to-back bid—comebacking Tour champ Victor Espiritu.

A day before the Boys of Summer take center stage again in the Tour's first lap, the rivalry between Quirimit and Espiritu has already caught fire. It was fueled by the fact that they lead teams from two bitter factions in Philippine cycling.

Quirimit is main man of the RP team while Espiritu leads the RP Trade team, which competes in international tours and is supported by the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp.

And though Quirimit and Espiritu will skipper teams owned by the same corporation—Tanduay and Beer na Beer, respectively—their Tour clash will, in a way, highlight the rivalry between the factions.

Montaña, Letran post 1st victories

BRIAN Tolentino and Ismael Junio delivered down the stretch as Montaña Pawnshop ended a two-game losing skid with a 68-65 win over Lee Pipes-Ateneo yesterday in the 2004 PBL Unity Cup at the Pasig Sports Center.

Newcomer Toyota Otis-Letran, drawing firepower from Ronjay Enrile, followed suit by tripping BluStar Detergent, 77-68, in the second game.

Enrile, a stalwart of NCAA champion Letran, topscored with 27 points as the Knights improved to 1-2 while pulling down BluStar to 0-3.

"It was like getting the monkey off my back. Getting the first win is very hard to do," said coach Louie Alas.

Junio strung up five points, including a triple, while the 6-foot-1 Tolentino provided the hustle and spunk in the final five minutes as the Jewels barged into the win column after three tries while handing the Eagles their third straight defeat.

Hulking Jondan Salvador had another monstrous game for the Jewels, tallying 17 points, 16 rebounds and two blocks.

Tolentino, a product of National University, finished with 13 points, including two pressure-packed charities that gave the Jewels a 65-60 lead with barely 34 ticks left.

Just when everybody thought the Eagles were goners, BJ Manalo buried a long triple and a short jumper against a split by Tolentino, but time was not on the Eagles' side. Vergara sealed the win for the Jewels with two charities with only 2.2 ticks left.

The Eagles took a 43-24 lead midway in the third quarter only to fall silent in four-minute span.

CJ del Rosario of Lee Pipes-Ateneo loses the ball off Montaña's Al Magpayo in this bit of action during yesterday's game. RUDY ESPERAS

The scores:

First Game

MONTAÑA 68—Salvador 17, Tolentino 13, Junio 8, Vergara 7, Magpayo 6, Espiritu 5, Ilanga 4, Guerrero 3, Buenafe 3, Najorda 2, Baluyot 2, Bonus 0.

LEE PIPES-ATENEO 65—Tenorio 11, Intal 11, Manalo 11, Gelig 9, Fonacier 11, Bugia 6, Membrere 4, Del Rosario 3, Roldan 2, Domingo 1, Quimpo 0.

Quarters: 9-7; 22-30; 43-48; 68-65.

Second Game

TOYOTA-OTIS 77—Enrile 27, Bautista 14, Daa 13, Aban 11, Pinera 4, Aldave 3, Moody 2, Valdez 2, Dula 1, Rodriguez 0, Anabo 0, Santos 0

BLUSTAR 68—Dela Cuesta 12, Pascual 10, Alfad 9, Tagupa 9, Villamin 9, Canaleta 8, Gamboa 4, Mesina 4, Victoria 2, Santos 1, Ferrer 0.

Quarters: 17-25, 37-40, 59-60, 77-68.

Estimo under the gun over funds

THE PROMPT liquidation of millions of funds by secretary general Samuel Estimo, not a snap election, will help solve the problems of the National Chess Federation of the Philippines.

This was stressed yesterday by NCFP executive director Casto "Toti" Abundo, who was empowered by the NCFP board, in a resolution, to temporarily assume the functions, duties and powers of Estimo.

In the same resolution signed by NCFP chair Andres Gatmaitan and president Mat Defensor, among others, Estimo was ordered to take a leave of absence while an inquiry into the association's accounts is ongoing.

For his part, Estimo said the resolution has been superseded by a memorandum issued last Tuesday by Defensor maintaining the status quo in the NCFP.

"It's exactly a month since (NCFP auditor) Juanito T. Calditaran has requested Estimo to transmit books of accounts, official receipt booklets and other financial records but Estimo has not done anything," said Abundo.

Estimo belied this, saying that an audit is ongoing. He added it was Abundo who is hampering the proceeding by asking parents of young chess players not to turn over the

ESTIMO/ A26

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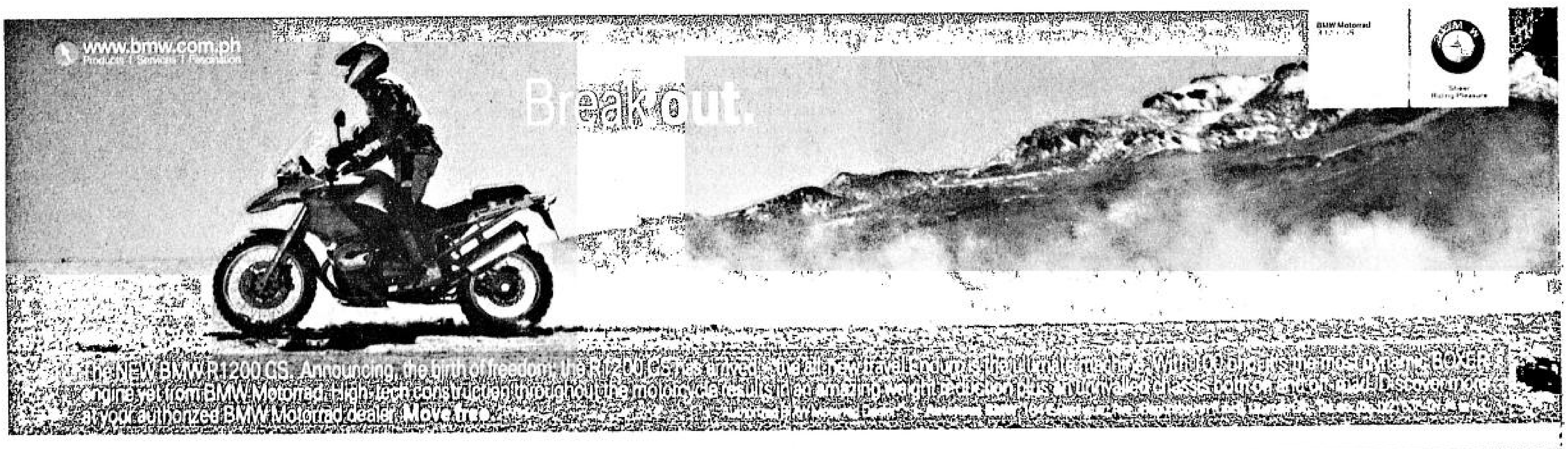
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PSC launches Athens 'Go for Gold'

By Trina Ibarle

ATHLETES competing in the 2004 Olympics got a major boost yesterday with the launching of the "Go for Gold Medal in Athens" project underscoring Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's support for the national contingent.

Under the project dubbed "Go GMA," athletes seeing action in the Games set this August will get full backing in their training.

According to Philippine Sports Commission Chair Eric Buhain, the Chief Executive instructed him to give the athletes the all-out support in their bid to finally capture an Olympic gold.

"(The) government is committed not only to support the athletes who are bound for Athens but also to those who are seeking berths in different qualifying events," Buhain quoted the President as saying.

Those who have already qualified for the Olympics include Violito Payla, Romeo Brin, and Christopher Camat (boxing); Tshomlee Go, Donald David Geisler, and Maria Antoinette Rivero (taekwondo); Miguel Mendoza, Miguel Molina, and Carlo Piccio (swimming), Eduardo Buenavista and Lerma Balauitan-Gabito (athletics), and Jasmine Figueroa (archery).

Buhain added that "Go GMA" will complement the "Create a Sports Hero" project by then senator Joey Lina in 1991, which grants gold medal winners of a livelihood program aside from cash incentives.

Lina's project helped the Philippines win 91 gold medals and the second overall title when the country hosted the Southeast Asian Games that same year.

Shell plays 3rd import vs TNT

Games Today (*Araneta Coliseum*)
4:45 p.m.—Talk 'N Text vs Shell
7 p.m.—Purefoods vs Red Bull

SHELL suits up a third import in Jameel Watkins today as the Turbo Chargers battle a souped-up Talk 'N Text squad looking to wrest solo second place in the elimination round of the Gran Matador PBA Fiesta Conference at the Big Dome.

Watkins, who claims to have played for the Houston Rockets last year, arrived last Monday and was measured at 6-feet-7 7/8, barely making Shell's height limit.

Talk 'N Text is in a three-way logjam for second at 6-3, two full games behind San Miguel Beer, and taking a two-game winning streak into the 4:45 p.m. contest.

Red Bull Barako tries to get back in the thick of things against Purefoods in the second game at 7 p.m.

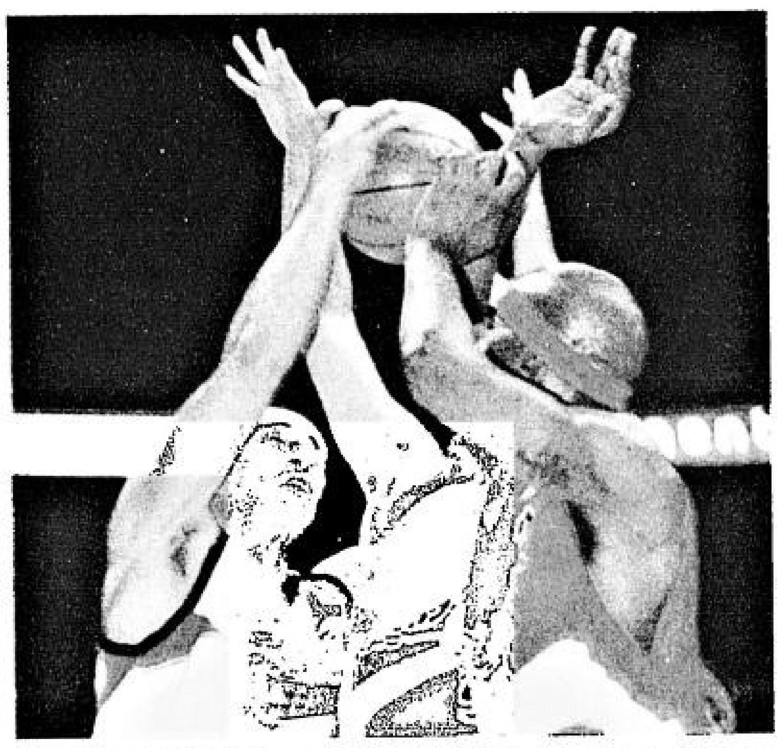
The Thunder have lost their last two games and are itching to give themselves a shot at the top two slots and earn a bye in the quarterfinals.

Watkins replaces Marek Ondera, Shell's original import choice who has suffered a pair of injuries.

For the record, Shell has been the busiest team in the off-season. It fired American coach John Moran and tapped successful amateur mentor and ex-PBA cager Leo Austria. The Turbo Chargers had also been reinforced for two games by the ineffective Brian Weathers.

At 3-6, Shell is just half-a-game up on cellar-dwelling Sta. Lucia Realty and wants nothing but a chance to finish in the upper half of the standings and earn a twice-to-beat privilege in the next round.

If Watkins turns out to be the savior that he is pictured to be, then Talk 'N Text will find the sailing rough today. *Musong Castillo*


AUGUST DELA CRUZ

NICK Belasco of San Miguel grabs the rebound off Mark Sanford of Coca-Cola Sunday. Belasco and Sanford figured in a fisticuff after the game.

Estimo . . .

From page A25

tickets they used in their World Chess Championship trip to Haldikiki, Greece last year.

Abundo said the resolution asking Estimo to step down is valid because it was signed by 10 of 15 directors, including Defensor, during a teleconference.

"This is accepted based on SEC Memo Circular No. 15, Series of 2001, dated 11-27-01 pertaining to teleconferencing," said Abundo. "This (Defensor memo) does not override a board resolution."

Estimo, however, insists that under the NCFP by-laws, there should be a quorum in attendance for a board resolution to be passed.

The call for a snap election, according to Abundo, "is a clear attempt to cover up for the failure of Estimo to account for the funds received by him on behalf of NCFP."

Among the funds that Estimo was asked by the board to account for was the allowances given by the Philippine Sports Commission to the national team that competed in the 2002 World Chess Olympiad in Bled, Slovenia.

Most of the team members, led by Grandmasters Joey Antonio, Bong Villamayor and International Master Nelson Mariano II, have filed sworn affidavits that they did not receive their allowances that Estimo got from the PSC.

Parents of the members of the national junior team that saw action in the World Chess Championship in Greece also claimed that their children were not able to get their allowances of $400 each that the PSC had allotted for them.

Canlubang batters, 3 others open with a bang

TANAUAN CITY—Canlubang, Bacolod, Cagayan and Batangas showed why they are the teams to beat at the start of the 2004 Little League Philippine Series here yesterday.

The Baby Barons mesmerized a sizeable crowd on Diamond One of the 24-hectare Plantacion del Sol by outslugging DepEd Bacolod, 10-6, while Cagayan proved too classy for newcomer Quezon City in a 12-0 whitewash.

Batangas and Bacolod both banked on sheer determination to pull off similar tight victories over their respective rivals in the premier 11-12 age bracket.

The Batangueños overcame a solid performance by Bulacan pitcher Regie Sta. Ana, who also scored two home runs, to prevail, 5-4, while Bacolod nipped Kalumpang, 12-11.

Silay City's softball teams made the biggest impact, though, on the 10-diamond RFM property.

Silay's junior girls' team crushed the taller Illam team, 11-1, before its senior team downed Valenzuela, 5-4.

Illam's Little League softbelles, the defending champion in the 11-12 bracket, averted a shut out by blasting Mt. Province, 23-10.

Host Tanauan, which was deprived of the Big League crown last year after officials upheld a protest against its victory, came back with a vengeance, clobbering Camarines Norte, 12-2.

A total of 67 teams are seeing action in eight categories in baseball and softball.

Little League baseball drew 26 teams which were grouped into four.

SPORTSWATCH

China Sea winner heads inshore racers

SUBIC—Frank Pong's Jelik, fresh off taking line honors in last Saturday's China Sea Race, leads 21 boats in the inshore races of the Smart Infinity-12th President's Cup Regatta 2004 which starts today in Subic Bay. Pong's crew was first across the finish line when it logged an elapsed time of 50 hours, 30.51 minutes in the 565-nautical mile journey from the Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club marina to the scenic coastline of Zambales. Jelik is among eight foreign entries which have confirmed their participation in this week-long event jointly organized by the Manila Yacht Club and the Subic Bay Yacht Club. The R/P 75 type boat is expected to fight it out with Fred Kimmonth's Stella Minter Ellison and Judes Echauz's Standard Insurance, which emerged as the top Philippine finisher in the China Sea Race. The fate of defending champion Karakoa, owned by Ray Ordoveza, remains unclear after it was forced to retire from the race due to a leak and damaged rudder while struggling with 27-foot high waves about 100 nautical miles south of Hong Kong. The absence of Karakoa makes Hi Fidelity a favorite to bag the Omega Yachting Circuit title. Overall handicap honors of the China Sea Race went to Sam Chan's Ffree Ffire, which logged a corrected time of 73 hours, 32 minutes and 33 seconds. Neil Pryde's Hi Fidelity, which placed second to Ffree Ffire, will also be around along with Paul Bankowski's Jaywalker, Gerry Daughton's Jaywalker, Time and Australian Maid.

Interactive tennis show set at MAC

THE PHILIPPINE Davis Cup tennis team will conduct a free tennis clinic and an interactive tennis exhibition, including a pro-am fun doubles mini tournament with the national players at the Metropolitan Athletic Club on Saturday afternoon. Fresh off their 4-1 victory over Hong Kong last weekend, the team, together with national coach Beeyong Sison, will hold the clinics for beginners, intermediate, and advance players. Registration starts at 1 p.m. at the MAC tennis lounge on Estrella St. across the Rockwell Center in Makati. The half-day event is sponsored by Philtown Inc., developer of the soon-to-rise Metropolitan Towers and Metropolitan Athletic Club, in cooperation with Dunlop, Sunkist, Aqua Blue Water, Swift Hotdogs, Selecta Ice Cream, Joey's Popcorn and Moo Fruity. For inquiries, call 830-0455.

76ers Cup tees off at Valley tomorrow

THE SECOND 76ers Cup golf tournament will be played tomorrow at the Executive Course of the Valley Golf and Country Club in Antipolo City. Tee-off time is from 10 a.m. to 12 noon, said lawyer Plaridel J. Bohol II, president of the organizing Samar National School Class 1976 Foundation Inc. The fund-raising event is being held for the benefit of the foundation's projects, including assistance to the Samar National School, which will celebrate its 100th foundation day on April 19-25. Tournament sponsors include Globe Telecoms, San Miguel Corp., Crateri Restaurant, Soniare Club Spa, Medicotek Inno/Risk Profiles Inc., Page Philippines, Alexa Construction and Avega Bros. Integrated Shipping Corp.

Inter-commercial chess starts Saturday

EVERYTHING is set for the P70,000 Inter-Commercial Chess team tournament which gets going on April 17 at the Starmall in Manadaluyong City. The two-day tournament will use the seven-round Swiss and one-hour time control in selecting the top five major winners and five individual top board performers. The champion team will receive the lion's purse of P25,000 plus trophy and medals, the second placer P15,000, 3rd P10,000; 4th P5,000 and 5th P3,000. Sanctioned by the National Chess Federation of the Philippines, the event is open to private and government firms, schools and universities. Team members must be employees of companies or varsity players of schools they are representing. Deadline for registration is on Friday at 6 p.m. For inquiries, call 826-8560 and 09168521069.

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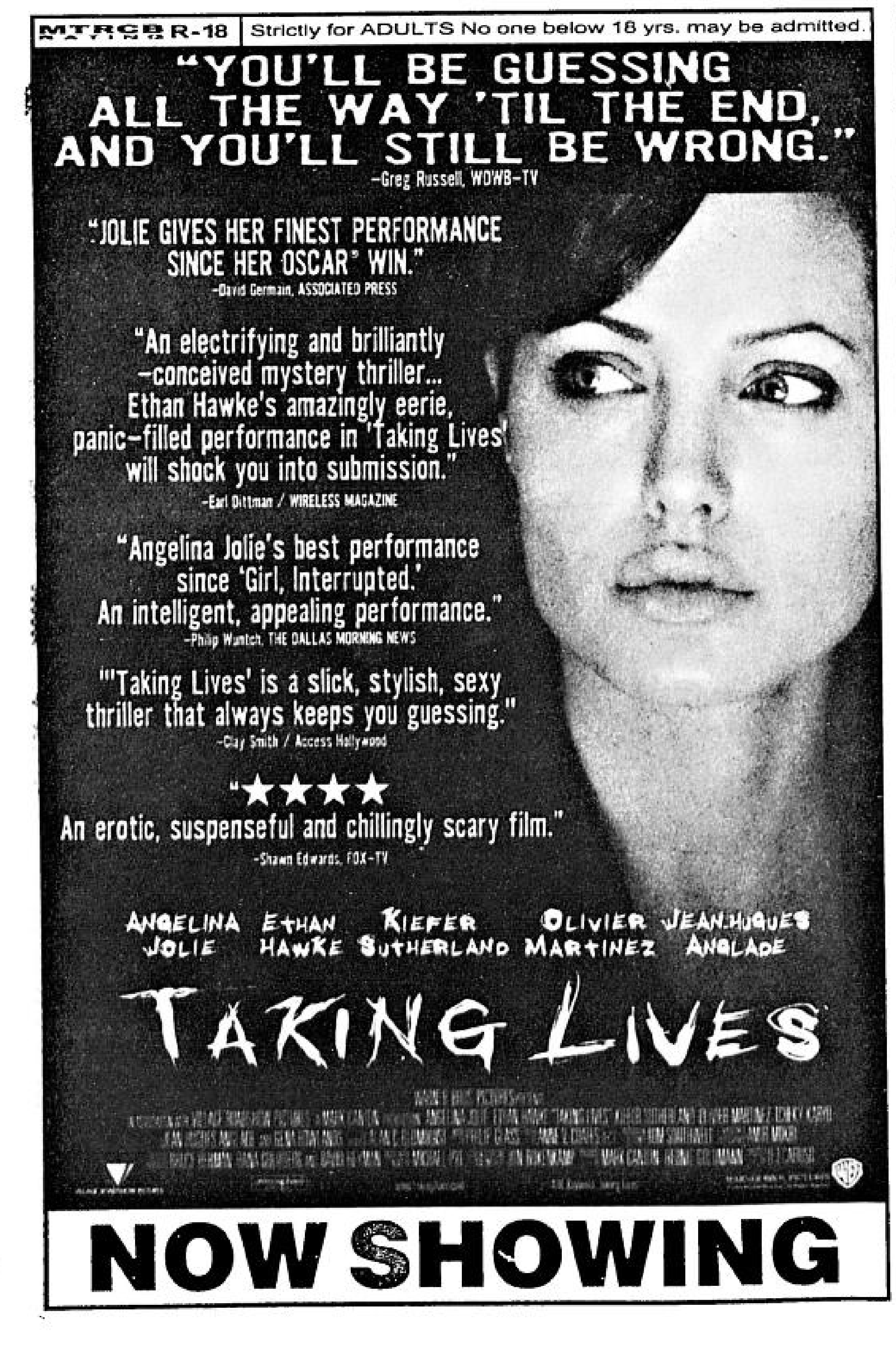
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But members of the Filipino team must watch out. Otherwise, they could also end up in tears while Mexican fight fans enjoy a real fistiana, a Christmas in May.

PSC launches Athens 'Go for Gold'

By Trina Ibarle

ATHLETES competing in the 2004 Olympics got a major boost yesterday with the launching of the "Go for Gold Medal in Athens" project underscoring Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's support for the national contingent.

Under the project dubbed "Go GMA," athletes seeing action in the Games set this August will get full backing in their training.

According to Philippine Sports Commission Chair Eric Buhain, the Chief Executive instructed him to give the athletes the all-out support in their bid to finally capture an Olympic gold.

"(The) government is committed not only to support the athletes who are bound for Athens but also to those who are seeking berths in different qualifying events," Buhain quoted the President as saying.

Those who have already qualified for the Olympics include Violito Payla, Romeo Brin, and Christopher Camat (boxing); Tshomlee Go, Donald David Geisler, and Maria Antoinette Rivero (taekwondo); Miguel Mendoza, Miguel Molina, and Carlo Piccio (swimming), Eduardo Buenavista and Lerma Balauitan-Gabito (athletics), and Jasmine Figueroa (archery).

Buhain added that "Go GMA" will complement the "Create a Sports Hero" project by then senator Joey Lina in 1991, which grants gold medal winners of a livelihood program aside from cash incentives.

Lina's project helped the Philippines win 91 gold medals and the second overall title when the country hosted the Southeast Asian Games that same year.

Shell plays 3rd import vs TNT

Games Today (*Araneta Coliseum*)
4:45 p.m.—Talk 'N Text vs Shell
7 p.m.—Purefoods vs Red Bull

SHELL suits up a third import in Jameel Watkins today as the Turbo Chargers battle a souped-up Talk 'N Text squad looking to wrest solo second place in the elimination round of the Gran Matador PBA Fiesta Conference at the Big Dome.

Watkins, who claims to have played for the Houston Rockets last year, arrived last Monday and was measured at 6-feet-7 7/8, barely making Shell's height limit.

Talk 'N Text is in a three-way logjam for second at 6-3, two full games behind San Miguel Beer, and taking a two-game winning streak into the 4:45 p.m. contest.

Red Bull Barako tries to get back in the thick of things against Purefoods in the second game at 7 p.m.

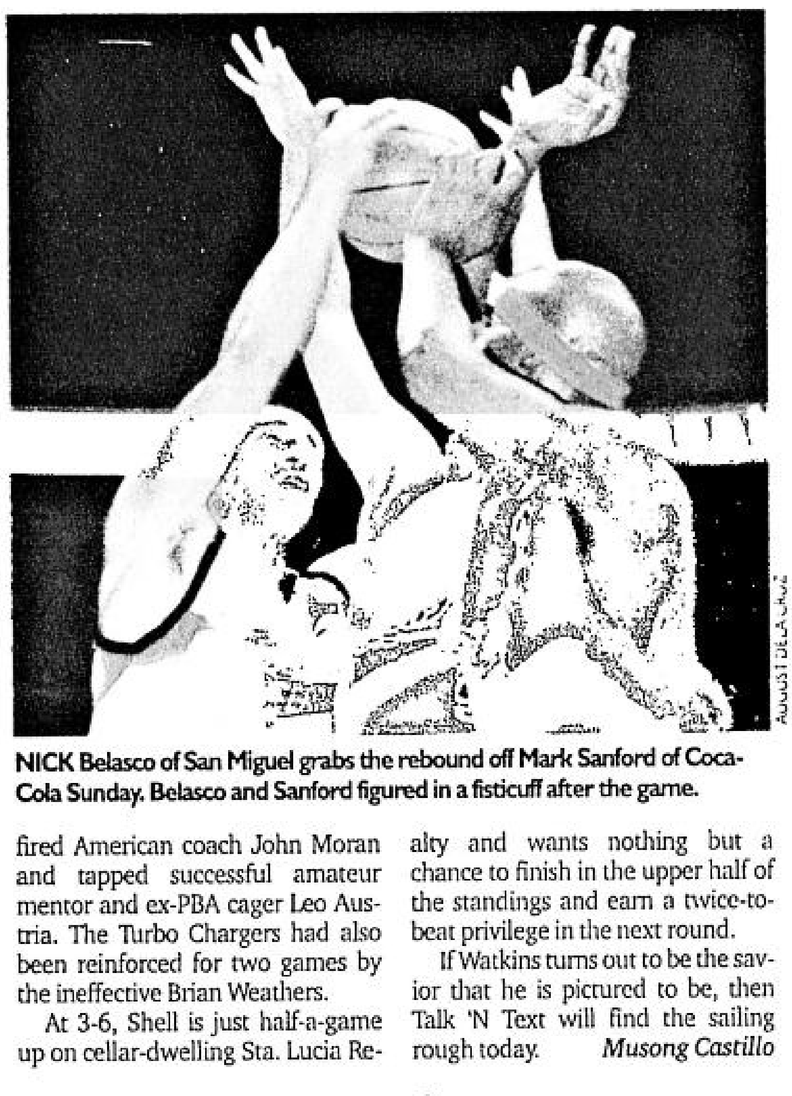
The Thunder have lost their last two games and are itching to give themselves a shot at the top two slots and earn a bye in the quarterfinals.

Watkins replaces Marek Ondera, Shell's original import choice who has suffered a pair of injuries.

For the record, Shell has been the busiest team in the off-season. It fired American coach John Moran and tapped successful amateur mentor and ex-PBA cager Leo Austria. The Turbo Chargers had also been reinforced for two games by the ineffective Brian Weathers.

At 3-6, Shell is just half-a-game up on cellar-dwelling Sta. Lucia Realty and wants nothing but a chance to finish in the upper half of the standings and earn a twice-to-beat privilege in the next round.

If Watkins turns out to be the savior that he is pictured to be, then Talk 'N Text will find the sailing rough today. *Musong Castillo*


AUGUST DELA CRUZ

NICK Belasco of San Miguel grabs the rebound off Mark Sanford of Coca-Cola Sunday. Belasco and Sanford figured in a fisticuff after the game.

Estimo . . .

From page A25

tickets they used in their World Chess Championship trip to Haldikiki, Greece last year.

Abundo said the resolution asking Estimo to step down is valid because it was signed by 10 of 15 directors, including Defensor, during a teleconference.

"This is accepted based on SEC Memo Circular No. 15, Series of 2001, dated 11-27-01 pertaining to teleconferencing," said Abundo. "This (Defensor memo) does not override a board resolution."

Estimo, however, insists that under the NCFP by-laws, there should be a quorum in attendance for a board resolution to be passed.

The call for a snap election, according to Abundo, "is a clear attempt to cover up for the failure of Estimo to account for the funds received by him on behalf of NCFP."

Among the funds that Estimo was asked by the board to account for was the allowances given by the Philippine Sports Commission to the national team that competed in the 2002 World Chess Olympiad in Bled, Slovenia.

Most of the team members, led by Grandmasters Joey Antonio, Bong Villamayor and International Master Nelson Mariano II, have filed sworn affidavits that they did not receive their allowances that Estimo got from the PSC.

Parents of the members of the national junior team that saw action in the World Chess Championship in Greece also claimed that their children were not able to get their allowances of $400 each that the PSC had allotted for them.

SPORTSWATCH

China Sea winner heads inshore racers

SUBIC—Frank Pong's Jelik, fresh off taking line honors in last Saturday's China Sea Race, leads 21 boats in the inshore races of the Smart Infinity-12th President's Cup Regatta 2004 which starts today in Subic Bay. Pong's crew was first across the finish line when it logged an elapsed time of 50 hours, 30.51 minutes in the 565-nautical mile journey from the Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club marina to the scenic coastline of Zambales. Jelik is among eight foreign entries which have confirmed their participation in this week-long event jointly organized by the Manila Yacht Club and the Subic Bay Yacht Club. The R/P 75 type boat is expected to fight it out with Fred Kim-month's Stella Minter Ellison and Judes Echauz's Standard Insurance, which emerged as the top Philippine finisher in the China Sea Race. The fate of defending champion Karakoa, owned by Ray Ordoveza, remains unclear after it was forced to retire from the race due to a leak and damaged rudder while struggling with 27-foot high waves about 100 nautical miles south of Hong Kong. The absence of Karakoa makes Hi Fidelity a favorite to bag the Omega Yachting Circuit title. Overall handicap honors of the China Sea Race went to Sam Chan's Ffree Ffire, which logged a corrected time of 73 hours, 32 minutes and 33 seconds. Neil Pryde's Hi Fidelity, which placed second to Ffree Ffire, will also be around along with Paul Bankowski's Jaywalker, Gerry Daughton's Jaywalker, Time and Australian Maid.

Interactive tennis show set at MAC

THE PHILIPPINE Davis Cup tennis team will conduct a free tennis clinic and an interactive tennis exhibition, including a pro-am fun doubles mini tournament with the national players at the Metropolitan Athletic Club on Saturday afternoon. Fresh off their 4-1 victory over Hong Kong last weekend, the team, together with national coach Beeyong Sison, will hold the clinics for beginners, intermediate, and advance players. Registration starts at 1 p.m. at the MAC tennis lounge on Estrella St. across the Rockwell Center in Makati. The half-day event is sponsored by Philtown Inc., developer of the soon-to-rise Metropolitan Towers and Metropolitan Athletic Club, in cooperation with Dunlop, Sunkist, Aqua Blue Water, Swift Hotdogs, Selecta Ice Cream, Joey's Popcorn and Moo Fruity. For inquiries, call 830-0455.

76ers Cup tees off at Valley tomorrow

THE SECOND 76ers Cup golf tournament will be played tomorrow at the Executive Course of the Valley Golf and Country Club in Antipolo City. Tee-off time is from 10 a.m. to 12 noon, said lawyer Plaridel J. Bohol II, president of the organizing Samar National School Class 1976 Foundation Inc. The fund-raising event is being held for the benefit of the foundation's projects, including assistance to the Samar National School, which will celebrate its 100th foundation day on April 19-25. Tournament sponsors include Globe Telecoms, San Miguel Corp., Crateri Restaurant, Soniare Club Spa, Medicotek Inno/Risk Profiles Inc., Page Philippines, Alexa Construction and Avega Bros. Integrated Shipping Corp.

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Canlubang batters, 3 others open with a bang

TANAUAN CITY—Canlubang, Bacolod, Cagayan and Batangas showed why they are the teams to beat at the start of the 2004 Little League Philippine Series here yesterday.

The Baby Barons mesmerized a sizeable crowd on Diamond One of the 24-hectare Plantacion del Sol by outslugging DepEd Bacolod, 10-6, while Cagayan proved too classy for newcomer Quezon City in a 12-0 whitewash.

Batangas and Bacolod both banked on sheer determination to pull off similar tight victories over their respective rivals in the premier 11-12 age bracket.

The Batangueños overcame a solid performance by Bulacan pitcher Regie Sta. Ana, who also scored two home runs, to prevail, 5-4, while Bacolod nipped Kalumpang, 12-11.

Silay City's softball teams made the biggest impact, though, on the 10-diamond RFM property.

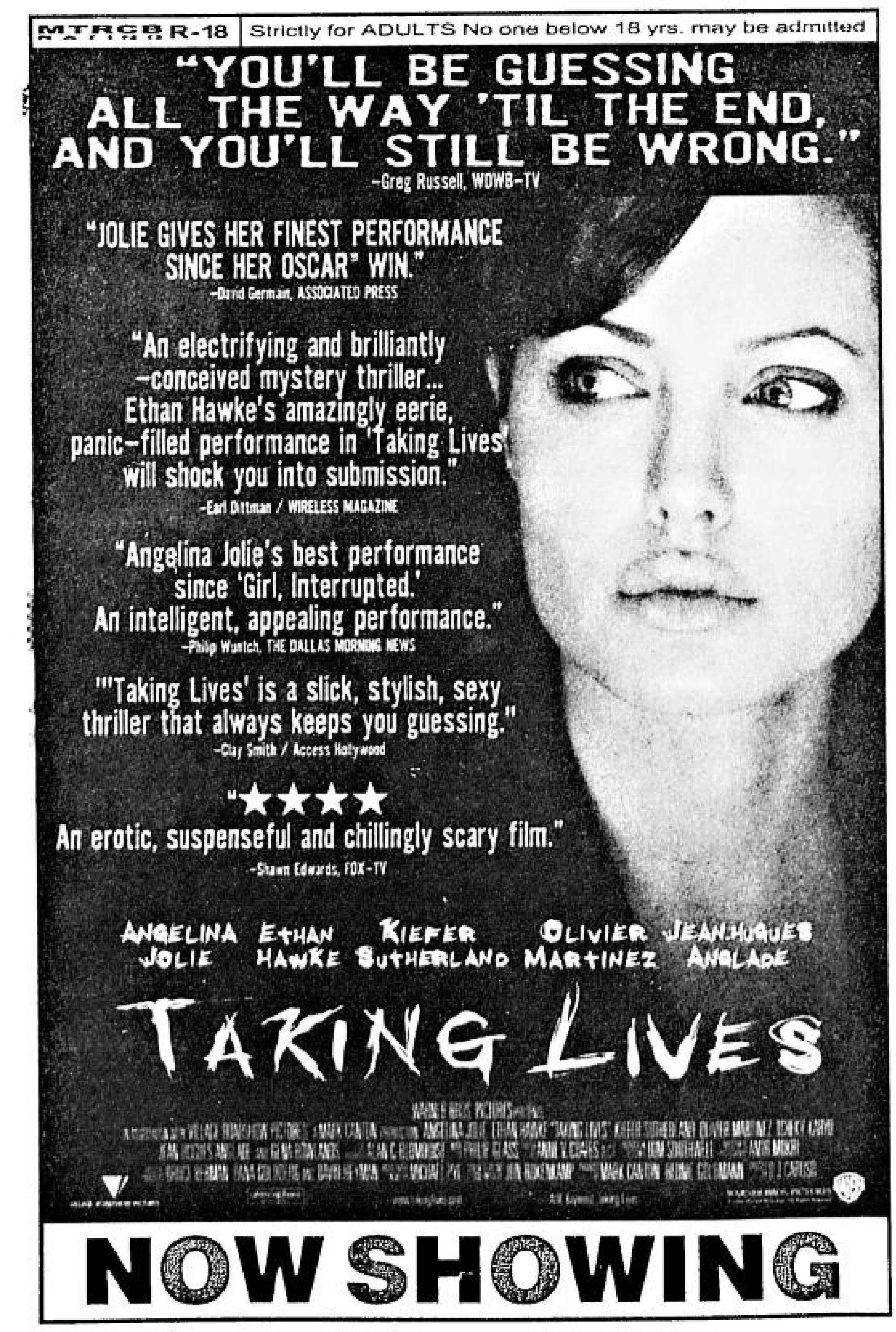
Silay's junior girls' team crushed the taller Illam team, 11-1, before its senior team downed Valenzuela, 5-4.

Illam's Little League softbelles, the defending champion in the 11-12 bracket, averted a shut out by blasting Mt. Province, 23-10.

Host Tanauan, which was deprived of the Big League crown last year after officials upheld a protest against its victory, came back with a vengeance, clobbering Camarines Norte, 12-2.

A total of 67 teams are seeing action in eight categories in baseball and softball.

Little League baseball drew 26 teams which were grouped into four.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Seaba jr men's cagefest gets under way

THE RP-BURLINGTON Youth Team begins its mission for redemption in the 4th Southeast Asian Junior Basketball Championship starting today at the Quezon Convention Center in Lucena City.

GAMES TODAY (*Quezon Convention Center*)
12:30 p.m.—RP vs Malaysia
3 p.m.—Thailand vs Singapore

Bidding to regain supremacy in the biennial event, the Filipinos clash with the defending champion Malaysians at 12:30 p.m. The game will be telecast starting at 6 p.m. over IBC-13.

Thailand, the 2002 edition runner-up, battles Singapore at 3 p.m. in the inaugurals of the event organized by the Basketball Association of the Philippines and the provincial and city governments of Quezon and Lucena City, and supported by Burlington Socks, Healthy Options, Absolute Distilled Water, Molten, FedEx, Lifan, Accel and the Philippine Sports Commission.

"We're very happy that after almost two months of preparations, the tournament will finally take off today. This is a great privilege for all of us here in Quezon. Rest assured that we will do everything to ensure its success," said Quezon Gov. Willie C. Enverga, who oversaw the preparation for the biennial event.

A brief opening ceremony will precede the games beginning at 10 a.m., with Philippine Olympic Committee chair Robert Aventajado serving as guest of honor and keynote speaker.

Also expected to grace the opening ceremony are Governor Enverga and Mayor Ramon Talaga and BAP officials Quinteliano "Tiny" Literal, Christian Tan, Graham Lim and Tony Fabico.

Roy Luarca

Nuggets grab last ticket to playoffs; Sura sizzles

NEW YORK—The 16 NBA playoff teams are finally known. Exactly who will be seeded where remains to be determined.

The Denver Nuggets became the final team to clinch a postseason berth, defeating the Sacramento Kings, 97-89, on Monday night in front of a boisterous crowd that included Michael Jordan.

Elsewhere, Minnesota beat Utah, 104-90; San Antonio downed Portland, 78-66; Miami topped Boston, 84-77; Cleveland edged Milwaukee, 93-89; Indiana ripped Philadelphia, 107-93; Atlanta clipped New Jersey, 129-107; Detroit routed Washington, 101-79; New York downed New Orleans, 101-97; Houston tripped Seattle, 111-107; and Chicago topped Orlando, 93-84.

The Nuggets will be the eighth seed, though they don't know yet whether they'll play the Kings, Lakers or Spurs. That answer won't come until late Wednesday night when the 82-game regular season concludes.

"This is a heck of a place to play and these people have been great all year," Denver guard Jon Barry said. "A lot of people didn't give us any chance and people believed, we believed in ourselves."

In Denver, Marcus Camby had 12 points, 21 rebounds, seven assists and five blocks to help the Nuggets reach the playoffs for the first time since 1995.

The third-largest crowd in Nuggets history (19,746) stood and cheered for several minutes after the game while players hugged and hammed it up with fans—a huge moment for a team that challenged the league's futility mark in 1998 and won just 17 games last season.

Sacramento lost any chance of gaining the top seed in the Western Conference and will have to wait until Wednesday against Golden State to try to secure its third straight division title.

The Kings shot just 1-for-13 on 3-pointers and were beaten 31-7 on the break to see their lead in the Pacific Division drop to a half-game over the Los Angeles Lakers.

"We had the most motivation we possibly could have," Kings guard Anthony Peeler said. "We could have clinched the Pacific tonight. Now we have to go home and do it on Wednesday. We're disappointed by this."

In Atlanta, Bob Sura became the first NBA player in seven years to have three straight triple-doubles. Sura had 22 points, 11 assists and 10 rebounds—the last rebound coming when he intentionally missed a layup just before the buzzer.

Sura smiled sheepishly, as if a little embarrassed by the way he accomplished his feat. He was the first player since Grant Hill in 1997 to have three straight games with double figures in scoring, rebounding and assists. *AP*

DENVER'S Carmelo Anthony (right) and Rodney White celebrate. AP

RACING TIPS

AT SANTA ANA BY MR. 999

Race 1—1. Free Again 2. Angel Eyes 3. Zarafun Mo

Race 2—1. Loose Cannon 2. Aspire 3. Words of Joy/El Dorado 4. Up Rising

Race 3—1. Western Legend 2. Happy Hoser 3. Maging Matalino

Race 4—1. Simiong 2. Queen of D Jungle 3. Mini Skirt 4. Currency 5. Chances Are

Race 5—1. Silakbo 2. Simple Doding 3. Magic Ewan Ko 4. True Mighty

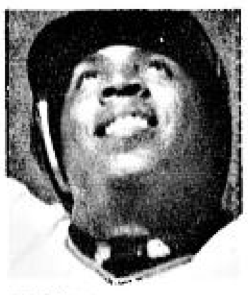
Race 6—1. Don Miguel 2. Twin Brother 3. Miguel's Pet 4. Screaming Eagle

Race 7—1. Gold Honors 2. Never Enough 3. Queen Banana 4. Extreme Illusion

Race 8—1. Real Material 2. Count Your Blessings 3. Stingray 4. Material Trick 5. Special Science 6. Classic Model

Bonds hits 660th homer, ties Mays

SAN FRANCISCO—Barry Bonds hit his 660th home run to match godfather Willie Mays for third on baseball's career list and help the San Francisco Giants defeat the Milwaukee Brewers, 7-5, on Monday.



BONDS REUTERS

Bonds' latest milestone homer came exactly as he would have scripted it: at home before a sellout crowd to give the Giants the lead.

The San Francisco slugger's towering three-run shot off Matt Kinney splashed into McCovey Cove and put the Giants up 5-4.

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Seaba jr men's cagefest gets under way

THE RP-BURLINGTON Youth Team begins its mission for redemption in the 4th Southeast Asian Junior Basketball Championship starting today at the Quezon Convention Center in Lucena City.

Bidding to regain supremacy in the biennial event, the Filipinos clash with the defending champion Malaysians at 12:30 p.m. The game will be telecast starting at 6 p.m. over IBC-13.

Thailand, the 2002 edition runner-up, battles Singapore at 3 p.m. in the inaugurals of the event organized by the Basketball Association of the Philippines and the provincial and city governments of Quezon and Lucena City, and supported by Burlington Socks, Healthy Options, Absolute Distilled Water, Molten, FedEx, Lifan, Accel and the Philippine Sports Commission.

GAMES TODAY (*Quezon Convention Center*)
12:30 p.m.—RP vs Malaysia
3 p.m.—Thailand vs Singapore

"We're very happy that after almost two months of preparations, the tournament will finally take off today. This is a great privilege for all of us here in Quezon. Rest assured that we will do everything to ensure its success," said Quezon Gov. Willie C. Enverga, who oversaw the preparation for the biennial event.

A brief opening ceremony will precede the games beginning at 10 a.m., with Philippine Olympic Committee chair Robert Aventajado serving as guest of honor and keynote speaker.

Also expected to grace the opening ceremony are Governor Enverga and Mayor Ramon Talaga and BAP officials Quinteliano "Tiny" Literal, Christian Tan, Graham Lim and Tony Fabico.

Roy Luarca

Nuggets grab last ticket to playoffs; Sura sizzles

NEW YORK—The 16 NBA playoff teams are finally known. Exactly who will be seeded where remains to be determined.

The Denver Nuggets became the final team to clinch a postseason berth, defeating the Sacramento Kings, 97-89, on Monday night in front of a boisterous crowd that included Michael Jordan.

Elsewhere, Minnesota beat Utah, 104-90; San Antonio downed Portland, 78-66; Miami topped Boston, 84-77; Cleveland edged Milwaukee, 93-89; Indiana ripped Philadelphia, 107-93; Atlanta clipped New Jersey, 129-107; Detroit routed Washington, 101-79; New York downed New Orleans, 101-97; Houston tripped Seattle, 111-107; and Chicago topped Orlando, 93-84.

The Nuggets will be the eighth seed, though they don't know yet whether they'll play the Kings, Lakers or Spurs. That answer won't come until late Wednesday night when the 82-game regular season concludes.

"This is a heck of a place to play and these people have been great all year," Denver guard Jon Barry said. "A lot of people didn't give us any chance and people believed, we believed in ourselves."

In Denver, Marcus Camby had 12 points, 21 rebounds, seven assists and five blocks to help the Nuggets reach the playoffs for the first time since 1995.

The third-largest crowd in Nuggets history (19,746) stood and cheered for several minutes after the game while players hugged and hammed it up with fans—a huge moment for a team that challenged the league's futility mark in 1998 and won just 17 games last season.

Sacramento lost any chance of gaining the top seed in the Western Conference and will have to wait until Wednesday against Golden State to try to secure its third straight division title.

The Kings shot just 1-for-13 on 3-pointers and were beaten 31-7 on the break to see their lead in the Pacific Division drop to a half-game over the Los Angeles Lakers.

"We had the most motivation we possibly could have," Kings guard Anthony Peeler said. "We could have clinched the Pacific tonight. Now we have to go home and do it on Wednesday. We're disappointed by this."

In Atlanta, Bob Sura became the first NBA player in seven years to have three straight triple-doubles. Sura had 22 points, 11 assists and 10 rebounds—the last rebound coming when he intentionally missed a layup just before the buzzer.

Sura smiled sheepishly, as if a little embarrassed by the way he accomplished his feat. He was the first player since Grant Hill in 1997 to have three straight games with double figures in scoring, rebounding and assists. *AP*

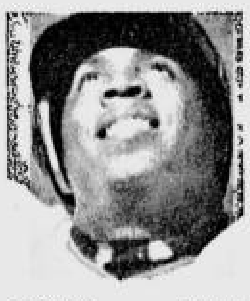
DENVER'S Carmelo Anthony (right) and Rodney White celebrate. AP

AT SANTA ANA BY MR. 999

Race 1—1. Free Again 2. Angel Eyes 3. Zarafun Mo
Race 2—1. Loose Cannon 2. Aspire 3. Words of Joy/El Dorado 4. Up Rising
Race 3—1. Western Legend 2. Happy Hoser 3. Maging Matalino
Race 4—1. Simlong 2. Queen of D Jungle 3. Mini Skirt 4. Currency 5. Chances Are
Race 5—1. Silakbo 2. Simple Doding 3. Magic Ewan Ko 4. True Mighty
Race 6—1. Don Miguel 2. Twin Brother 3. Miguel's Pet 4. Screaming Eagle
Race 7—1. Gold Honors 2. Never Enough 3. Queen Banana 4. Extreme Illusion
Race 8—1. Real Material 2. Count Your Blessings 3. Stingray 4. Material Trick 5. Special Science 6. Classic Model

Bonds hits 660th homer, ties Mays

SAN FRANCISCO—Barry Bonds hit his 660th home run to match godfather Willie Mays for third on baseball's career list and help the San Francisco Giants defeat the Milwaukee Brewers, 7-5, on Monday.



BONDS REUTERS

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BOY VS DIABETES
Celebrity talk show host Boy Abunda (third from left) joins the fight against diabetes by promoting a healthy diet and lifestyle, which includes regular exercise and a low-fat, high-fiber diet fortified with Charantia Ampalaya Food Supplement. Boy becomes part of Operation Diabetes, a public service program of the Association of Municipal Health Officers of the Philippines, and Herbcare Corp., maker of Charantia. With Boy are (from left) Herbcare GM Daniel Abelarde, PR and advertising manager Wee Abelarde, and Boy's business manager, Dondon Monteverde.

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2	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	1:10, 4:10, 7:10, 10:10	PG-13
3	TAKING LIVES	11:40, 2:15, 4:50, 7:25, 10:00	R-18
4	PETER PAN	11:20, 1:40, 4:00 6:20, 8:40, 10:55	GP

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TWISTED **R13** 12:20, 2:20, 4:20, 6:20, 8:20, 10:20	**UNINVITED** **R13** 12:15, 2:45, 5:15, 7:45, 10:10	**PAYCHECK** **PG13** 12:50, 3:15, 5:40, 8:05, 10:30

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ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY / LEGEND OF CROCODILE

QUEZON CITY

ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	LIGAYA / NANABIK
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR

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B	CLOSED
C	

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CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION

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CINEMA-1	ACACIA
CINEMA-2	PUNLA
CINEMA-3	UNINVITED
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	SCOOBY DOO 2
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	HOUSE OF THE DEAD
CINEMA-6	SORUM
CINEMA-7	NANANABIK
CINEMA-8	VENUS
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	PAYCHECK
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	PETER PAN
CINEMA-12	TAKING LIVES
CINEMA-14	TWISTED
CINEMA-15	MASIKIP SA DIBDIB

LORES

CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT

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(LAS PINAS)	SCOOBY DOO 2
CINEMA-1	MASIKIP SA DIBDIB
CINEMA-2	HIDALGO
CINEMA-4	GRUDGE 2

UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL

(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
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CINEMA-4	SELDA

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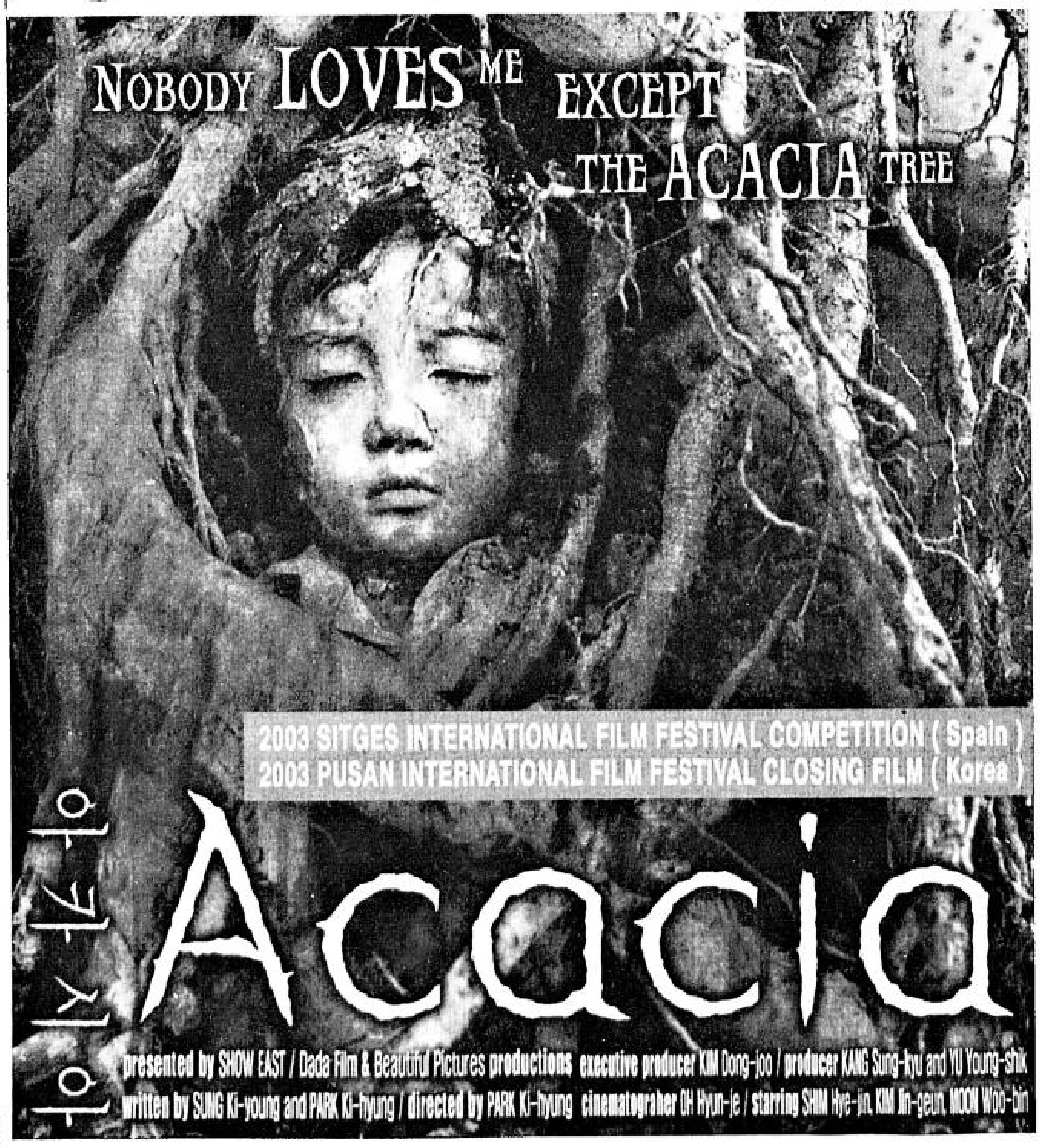
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written by SUNG Ki-young and PARK Ki-hyung / directed by PARK Ki-hyung cinematograher OH Hyun-je / starring SHIM Hye-jin, KIM Jin-geun, MOON Woo-bin

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1 BOOBITA ROSE
2 (DOLBY) PETER PAN
3 (DTS) PAY CHECK
4 TAKING LIVES

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel (075) 568.6771
1 50 FIRST DATE
2 GRUDGE-2
3 (DOLBY) SCOOBY DOO-2

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1
2 HIDALGO
3 (DOLBY) BUTTERFLY EFFECTS
4 (DTS) SCOOBY DOO-2

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795-3320
1 BOOBITA ROSE
2 HIDALGO
3 PASSION OF CHRIST

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 (SDDS) BUTTERFLY EFFECTS
2 KARIBAL
3 PHONOGRAPER
4 (DTS) BOOBITA ROSE

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 (DOLBY) PETER PAN
2 BOOBITA ROSE
3 (DTS) PAY CHECK
4 TAKING LIVES
5 HOUSE OF THE DEAD/ PUNLA

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883
1 VENUS
2 ACACIA

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249.2558
1 PETER PAN
2 TAKING LIVES
3 BOOBITA ROSE

Mega Center Mall
(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283
1 GRUDGE-2
2 50 FIRST DATE
3 (DTS) SCOOBY DOO-2
4 (DOLBY) BOOBITA ROSE

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel 520.8914
1 (DTS) RESERVE

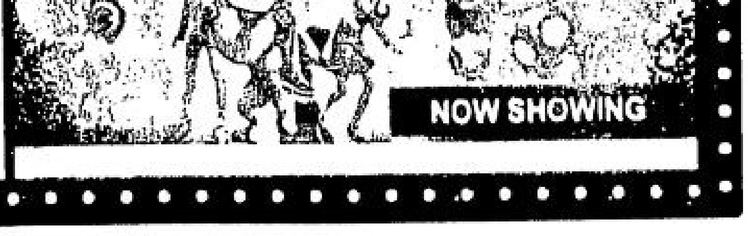
Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 BOOBITA ROSE
2 THE GRUDGE-2
3 HIDALGO
4 TAKING LIVES

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657
1 BOOBITA ROSE
2 KARIBAL

*Movies are subject to change without prior notice

ADVANCED SCREENING THX DOLBY dts SDDS

FESTIVAL CINEMA
Level 4
Festival Supermall
Filinvest - Alabang
Tel. 85035-71 to 72
Schedule subject to change without prior notice



BOY VS DIABETES
Celebrity talk show host Boy Abunda (third from left) joins the fight against diabetes by promoting a healthy diet and lifestyle, which includes regular exercise and a low-fat, high-fiber diet fortified with Charantia Ampalaya Food Supplement. Boy becomes part of Operation Diabetes, a public service program of the Association of Municipal Health Officers of the Philippines, and Herbcare Corp., maker of Charantia. With Boy are (from left) Herbcare GM Daniel Abelarde, PR and advertising manager Wee Abelarde, and Boy's business manager, Dondon Monteverde.

EASTWOOD CINEMAS

Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City
E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave. (C-5) Quezon City

DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

For inquiries call:
687-6963 • 687-6972

RESERVED SEATING

MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITH NOTICE

PAY CHECK	11:50, 2:20, 4:50 7:20, 9:50 PG 13
THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	1:10, 4:10, 7:10, 10:10 PG 13
TAKING LIVES	11:40, 2:15, 4:50, 7:25, 10.00 R 18
PETER PAN	11 20, [illegible]:40, 4.00 6:20, 8:40, 10:55 GP

POWER PLANT CINEMA

Rockwell Center, Makati City

THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST PG13 11 40, 2:1[illegible] [illegible]30, 10:1[illegible]	PETER PAN GP [illegible] [illegible]5, 9:40	TAKING LIVES R18 1[illegible] 3 35, 5:50 8.05, 10:2[illegible]
TWISTED R13 12.20 2 20 4 2[illegible] 6 20 8:20, 10 2[illegible]	UNINVITED R13 [illegible] 2:45, 5 1[illegible] 7:45 10:10	PAYCHECK PG13 12 50, 3 15, 5.4[illegible] 8:05 10:30

MATINEE P80.00 - FREE SEATING - SCREENINGS BEFORE 5 PM - MON. TO FRI.

THEATRE MALL

GREENHILLS

NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 1	PAYCHECK 11:25 2:00, 4 35 7:10, 9:50 P13
CINEMA 2	PETER PAN 11 30 2:05, 4.40, 7:15, 9:50 GP

TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE
GREENHILLS SHOPPING CENTER, ORTIGAS AVENUE, GREENHILLS, SAN JUAN, METRO MANILA • 722[illegible]

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THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA

EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / PAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	[illegible]

QUEZON CITY

ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	[illegible]
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	[illegible]
REMAR	[illegible]
REMAR-2	[illegible]

NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA

A	[illegible]
B	
C	

MANDALUYONG CITY

SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 - 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	[illegible]
CINEMA-2	[illegible]

CAINTA RIZAL

STA. LUCIA EAST	(661 5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	[illegible]
CINEMA-2	[illegible]
CINEMA-3	[illegible]
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	
CINEMA-6	
CINEMA-7	[illegible]
CINEMA-8	[illegible]
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	
CINEMA-12	
CINEMA-14	
CINEMA-15	

LORES

CINEMA-[illegible]	[illegible]
CINEMA-3	[illegible]

SM CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN

(LAS PINAS)	
CINEMA-[illegible]	
CINEMA-[illegible]	
CINEMA-4	

UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL

(PARANAQUE)	
CINEMA-[illegible]	
CINEMA	
CINEMA-[illegible]	

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MOVIE GUIDE

NOW SHOWING

EMAIL: mmta@asia.com

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 PASSION OF [illegible]
2 ACACIA
3 TAKING [illegible]
4 PASSION OF
5
6 TWIS[illegible]
7 PA[illegible]
8
9 [illegible]
10

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687 6963 or 72
1
2
3
4

Masagana CINEMA 2000
(Pasay) tel 833 3290 833 3274
1
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3

star mall Movies
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Mandaluyong) tel 724.4986
1
2
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5

METROPOLIS star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Alabang) tel 850 4285
1
2
3
4
5
6

www.clickthecity.com.ph
star
(Las Pinas) tel 873 5004
1
2

PREMIERE CINEMA THX
(Makati City) tel 892.2503

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1
2

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838 4301 loc. 3376
1
2
3
4

GOTESCO CINEMA

Gotesco City
(Manila) tel 734.8588
5
6
7
8
9

Gotesco Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364.3781
1 TAKING LIVES
2 PETER PAN
3 [illegible]BITA ROS[illegible]
4 TWISTED
5 PAY CHECK
6 THE CHRIST
7 UNINVITED
8 VENUS
9 ACACIA

Gotesco Commonwealth
tel 951 0083
1
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3
4
5

Gotesco Ortigas
tel 655.6795
1
2
3 AK[illegible]
4
5

Universal
(Manila) tel 733 2470
1

Dilson
(Manila) tel 734.7724
Dilson
Lords

Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 533.3856
1
2
3
4

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
SUPER CINERAMA
tel 733.4238
1
2
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4
5

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 879 2029
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"THE CENTER OF ENTERTAINMENT"
Araneta Center
MALL CINEPLEX
1
2
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4
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6

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887 5001 to 03
1
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3
4

Cine Nepo
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.0121
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3
4

Cine Nepo
(Dagupan City) tel (075) 515 8489
1
2
3
4

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa, Laguna) tel (049) 837.0926
1 BOOBITA ROSE
2 TAKING LIVES
3 PETER PAN

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 BOOBITA ROSE
2 TAKING LIVES
3 PAY CHECK
4 PETER PAN

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Binan) tel (049) 411.1146
1 BOOBITA ROSE
2 PETER PAN
3 PAY CHECK
4 TAKING LIVES

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
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Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1
2 [illegible]
3 [illegible]
4 SCOOBY DOO 2

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) [illegible]
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Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1
2 SAMBA
3 [illegible]
4 BOOBITA ROSE

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 PETER PAN
2 BOOBITA ROSE
3 PAY CHECK
4 TAKING LIVES
5 THE DEAD [illegible]

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Binan) tel (049) 511.8883
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2

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249.2558
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Mega Center Mall
Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463 3283
1
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3
4

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel 520 8914

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981 9790
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3
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Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438 1657
1
2

*Movies are subject to change without prior notice

ADVANCED SCREENING THX DOLBY dts SDDS

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Tel 85035-71 to
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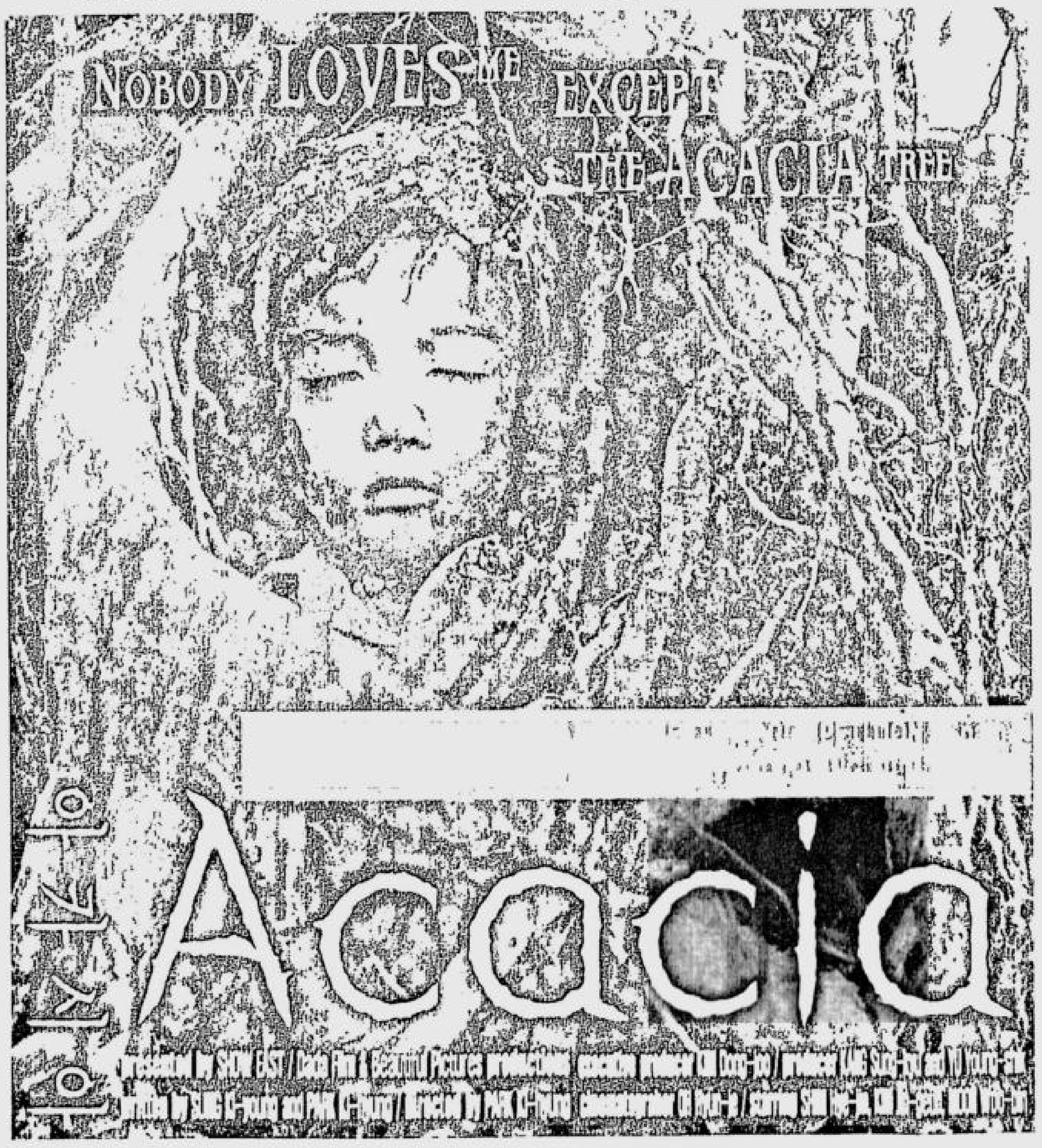
SCOOBY-DOO 2 MONSTERS UNLEASHED
NOW SHOWING

MTRCB ▶ R-13

OPENS TODAY!


NOBODY LOVES ME EXCEPT THE ACACIA TREE

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Kids always come first for Nick

By Alexa H. Bacay

THE NICKELODEON is more than just a button on the remote.

The Orange channel believes that kids always come first, according to Nickelodeon Asia managing director Richard Cunningham. The kids-first philosophy is reflected in its programs, which are non-violent, gender neutral, humorous, diverse and involve real kid experiences. Parents have no fear leaving their 2- to 14-year-olds tuned to Nickelodeon.

Nickelodeon is not all about such popular shows as "Rugrats," "Wild Thornberrys" and "Spongebob Squarepants." Cunningham points out that it is also involved in pro-social work such as the Big Help and the Say Yes campaign.

The Big Help was launched in Asia to encourage kids to make their world a better place by volunteering in their communities. Nick tries to communicate the concept of the campaign—every little bit counts—through six basic actions: Visit, Fix, Clean, Give, Do and Care. In 2003, the kids who took some of the best action steps had a chance to do a grab-all-you-can toy run at a Metro Manila shopping mall. The lucky kids ran through a maze of toys, grabbing as much toys as they could within a two-minute limit. The kids got to keep the toys they grabbed, while the cash value equivalent of what they picked was donated to local children's charities.

"What a dream for a kid to get to stand in a toy store, running through, grabbing as much toys as they can and keeping the toys as a prize," Cunningham tells INQUIRER Entertainment in a phone interview.

The Say Yes campaign is in partnership with the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef).

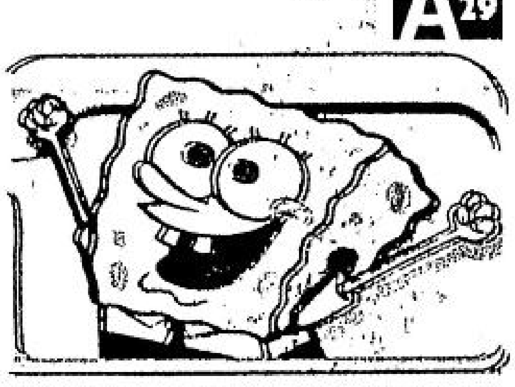
The Big Help campaign, introduced in the United States in 1994, and in Asia in 2002, will be back at the end of the year. The Say Yes campaign will be carried out late this summer.

Cunningham says that both on air and off air, through Nick's programs and campaign, the kids-first philosophy is always applied.

"We just think of the kids," he says. "We're not trying to reach the parents or anything like that. We're really trying to get into the head of a 2- to 14-year-old and say, 'this is what they

KIDS/ A30

CUNNINGHAM


SPONGEBOB Squarepants, one of the popular shows on Nick

MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13 Children below 13 yrs. old will be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult.

THE MOST EXPLOSIVE MOVIE EVENT OF THE YEAR!

THE FUTURE DEPENDS ON A PAST HE WAS PAID TO FORGET.
FROM THE DIRECTOR OF MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE II AND FACE/OFF
BEN AFFLECK
AARON ECKHART
UMA THURMAN
PAYCHECK

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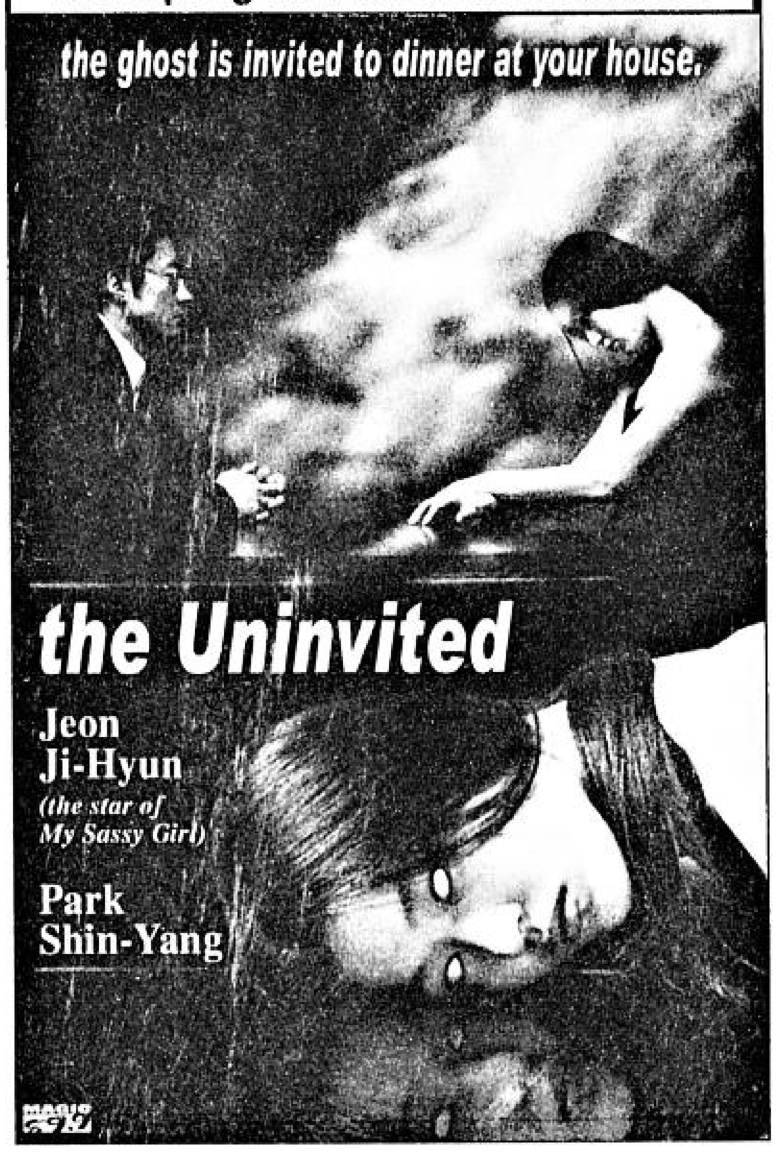
the ghost is invited to dinner at your house.
the Uninvited
Jeon Ji-Hyun
(the star of My Sassy Girl)
Park Shin-Yang

Araneta Center
ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX

Ali 3	MASIKIP SA DIBDIB
Ali 4	PAYCHECK
Ali 5	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
Ali 6	PETER PAN
Ali 7	TAKING LIVES

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Open Daily 4 PM to 10 PM

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APR 14	PBA : PUREFOODS VS. RED BULL
APR 15	NCA 7-COCK DERBY
APR 16	REWIND PLUS DOBLE REVO DOUBLE PREMYO
APR 17	18TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LORD'S FLOCK
APR 18	PBA : COKE VS. FEDEX
APR 20	NCA 7 - COCK DERBY
APR 21	PBA : SHELL VS. SAN MIGUEL
APR 22	NCA 7-COCK DERBY
APR 24	MY GIFT PIOLO PASCUAL 1ST TIME IN CONCERT

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From March 22 to April 22, 2004 only
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After X-Men & LXG comes a new
special-effects-packed comicbook adventure !
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HERE TO PROTECT

HELLBOY
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Distributed by COLUMBIA PICTURES

"TWISTED"

Ashley Judd

The curse of THE BLACK WIDOW?

The film is about Jessica Shepard (Ashley Judd), a newly promoted police inspector in search of a sadistic killer. Ashley notes, " Shepard has sort of a black widow thing going on. Every man she is involved with died in the most gruesome ways imaginable after having sex with her..

" The investigation becomes more and more twisted as her partner, Mike Delmarco (Garcia), behaves strangely, and the police commissioner (Samuel L. Jackson) is being asked to remove her from the investigation as she is a prime suspect. All the clues point to her and Jessica begins to suspect that she might be the killer she is seeking. Is She or isn't she?

After boxoffice hits ' Kiss The Girls' and' High Crimes'. Ashley Judd returns in "*Twisted*" another suspense/ thriller that will keep you at the edge of your seats from beginning to end.

ADVT

EVERYTHING THAT HAS A BEGINNING HAS AN END
MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
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VILLAGE ROADSHOW PICTURES
WARNER BROS PICTURES

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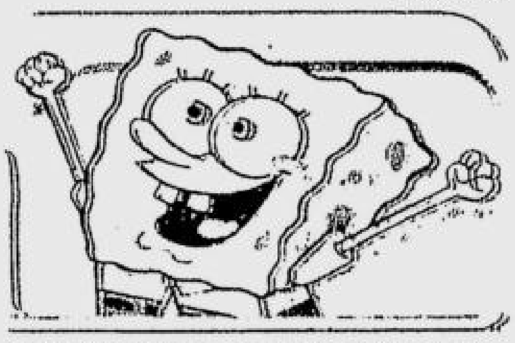
CUNNINGHAM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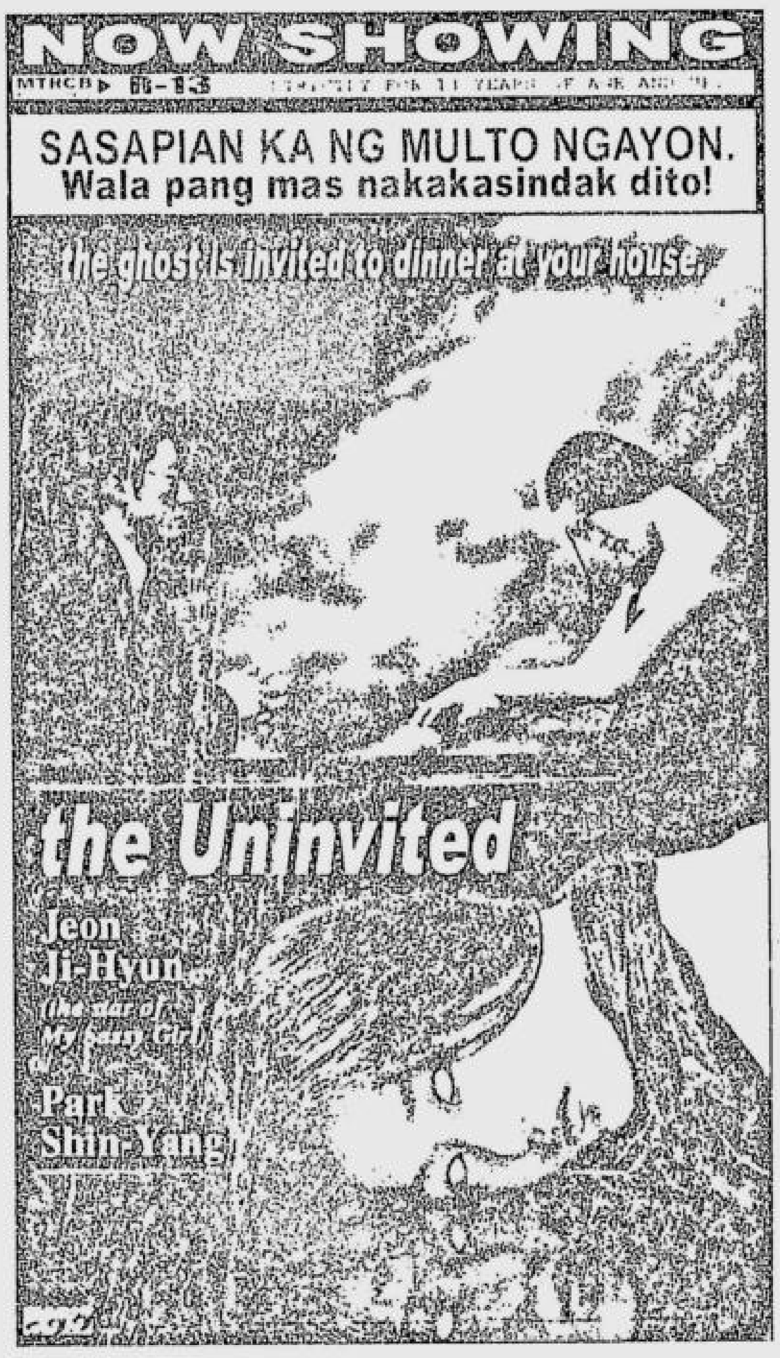
KIDS/ A30

MTRCB ▶ PG-13
THE MOST EXPLOSIVE MOVIE EVENT OF THE YEAR!
THE FUTURE DEPENDS ON A PAST HE WAS PAID TO FORGET.
BEN AFFLECK
AARON ECKHART
UMA THURMAN
PAYCHECK
OPENS TODAY !


NOW SHOWING
MTRCB ▶ R-13
SASAPIAN KA NG MULTO NGAYON.
Wala pang mas nakakasindak dito!
the ghost is invited to dinner at your house
the Uninvited
Jeon Ji-Hyun
Park Shin-Yang

Araneta Center
ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE
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Ali 3 MASIKIP SA DIBDIB
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Ali 7 TAKING LIVES
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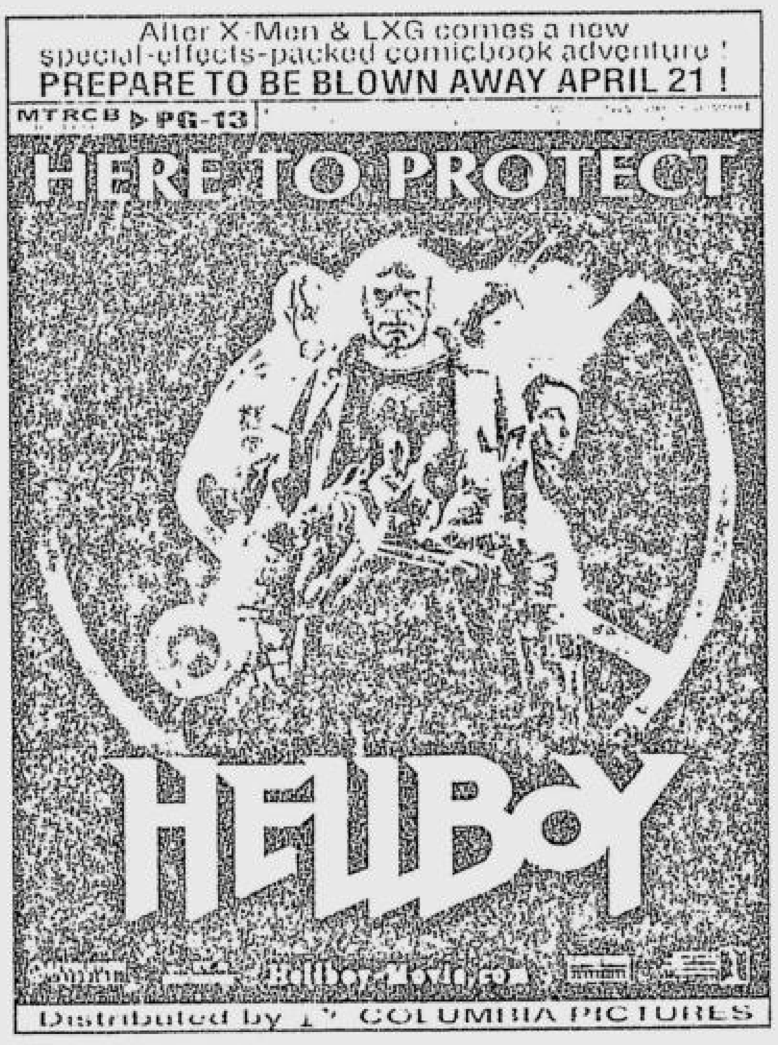
ARANETA COLISEUM
NCA 7-COCK DERBY
PBA COKE VS FEDEX
NCA COCK DERBY
PBA SHELL VS SAN MIGUEL
NCA COCK DERBY
For tickets call TicketNet at 911-5555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"TWISTED"
Ashley Judd

The curse of THE BLACK WIDOW?

Jessica Shepard (Ashley ... promoted police inspector in ... sadistic killer. Ashley notes, ... sort of a black widow thing ... man she is involved ... ex with he

The ... estigation becomes more ... her partner, Mike Delmarc ... behaves strangely, and the ... Samuel L. Jackson is ... her from the investigat ... suspect. All the clues poin ... to suspect that she ... seekin ... Is Sh

... Judd ... Twisted ...

EVERYTHING THAT HAS A BEGINNING HAS AN END
REVOLUTIONS
NOW ON VIDEO!
VILLAGE ROADSHOW PICTURES

STARSTRUCK AVENGERS: Catch Christian Esteban, Tyron Perez, Alvin Aragon, Sheena Halili, Jade Lopez and the rest of the "Starstruck" Avengers and winners every Monday and Thursday, 5:30-6 p.m., on GMA 7 and "Stage 1 Live!" with hosts Cogie Domingo, Chynna Ortaleza and VJ Raymond every Friday, 5-6 p.m., also on GMA. Photo shows Christian, Tyron and Alvin in Guess jackets, shirts and eyewear.

Concert series

LEADING Filipino bands are brought closer to a nationwide audience by Winston in Concert Series.

The series marks a successful first quarter for 2004 with performances by Freestyle, Parokya ni Edgar, Rage, Barbie's Cradle, Tropical Depression, Soulid, Sugarfree, Moonstar 88 and Fusion.

Parokya performs tonight at Ratsky on Tomas Morato. First Circle takes centerstage at Dream Bar on Friday.

Rage Band conquers Tarlac with a performance at R&B on Saturday.

Minors are not allowed in every Winston in Concert series. Only those 18 years old and above are admitted. Prizes and surprises are in store for everybody.

Kids always . . .

From page A29

want to watch.'

"We're more than just animation. We have live action as well. We have game shows, we have sitcoms. We have other kid-focused shows."

This year, Nick introduced new shows. One is "My Dad the Rock Star," a funny take on what it's like to be a kid when your dad is a big rock star. The show is based on a book by Gene Simmons, a member of the Kiss band.

There's "High-5," which is a show full of singing, dancing and learning, targeted at pre-schoolers. It features five actors from Australia as hosts.

The "Rugrats" have gotten older in the new show "All Grown Up." The lives of Tommy and company 10 years after can be followed in this new show.

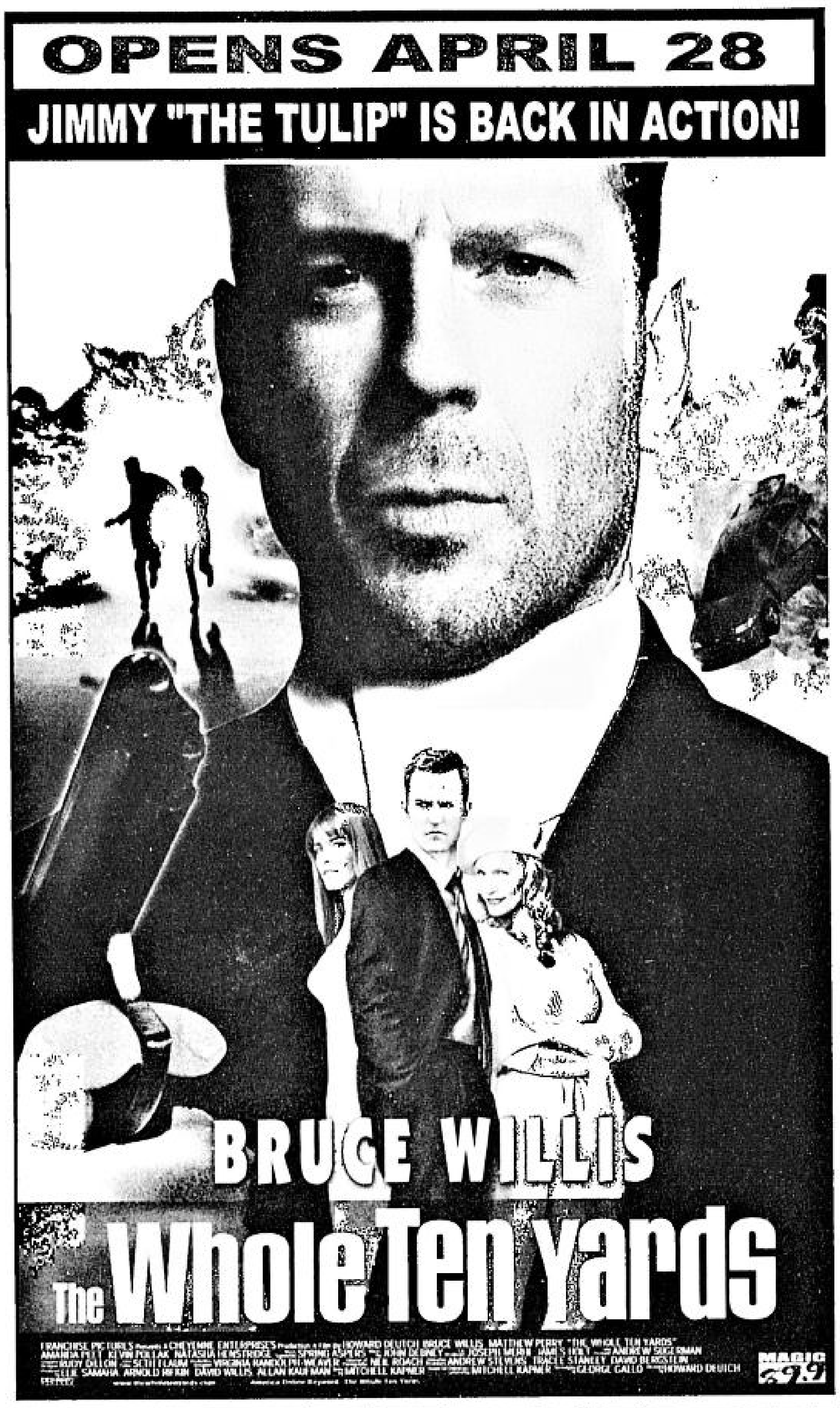
The very popular "Spongebob Squarepants," which is also viewed now by kids outside the 2-to-14-year-old range, will be moving to the big screen around Easter time 2005. The movie is currently in production.

"Our shows all feature universal themes that kids in the Philippines can relate to," says Cunningham.

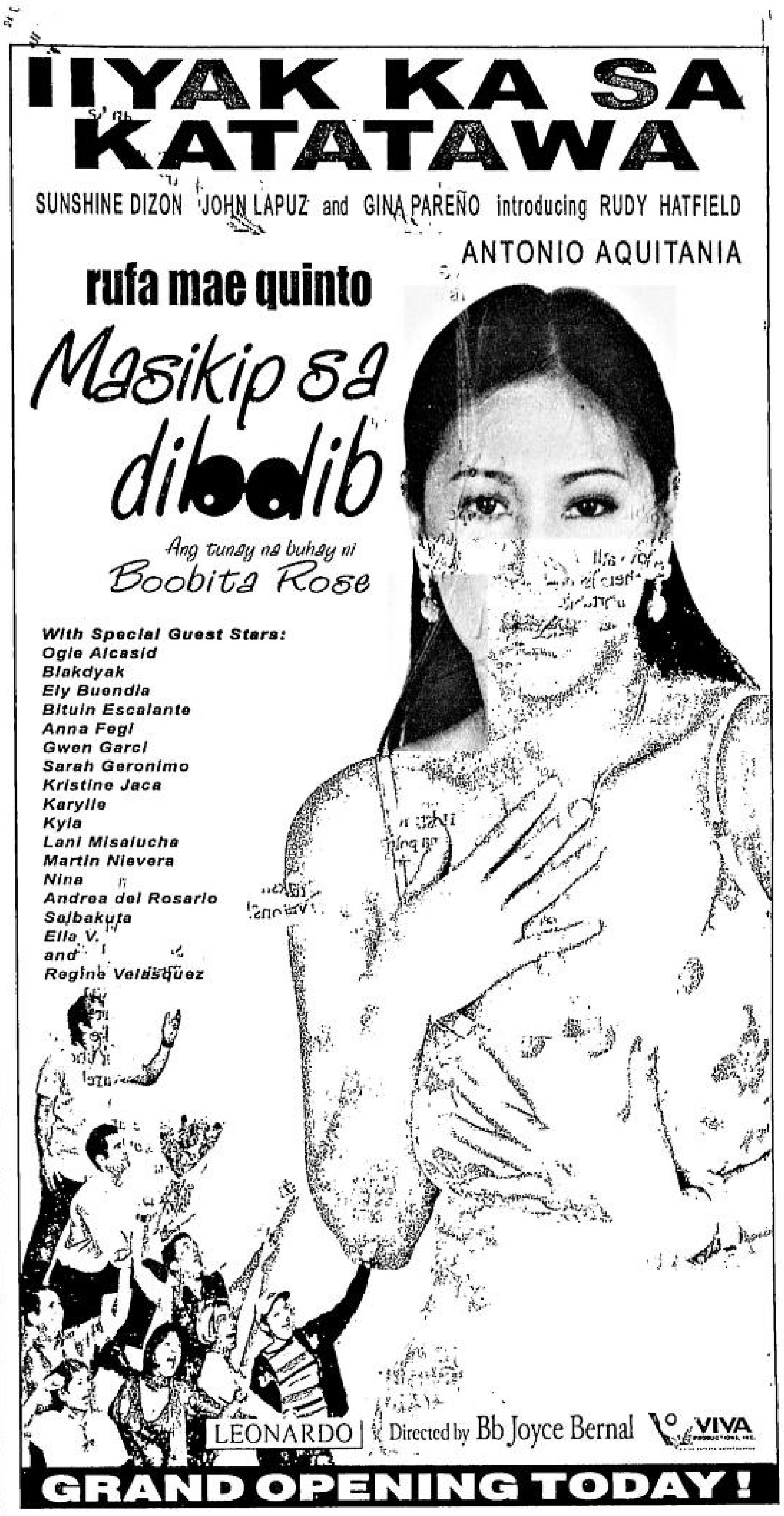
The channel's teen-targeted block, Whacked! which used to be TEENick, is produced in the Philippines and features local hosts.

Nickelodeon aims to be the first choice entertainment brand for kids not only as a TV channel but also in the Internet and the kids' mobile phones. So there will be more surprises in store for everyone, promises Cunningham.

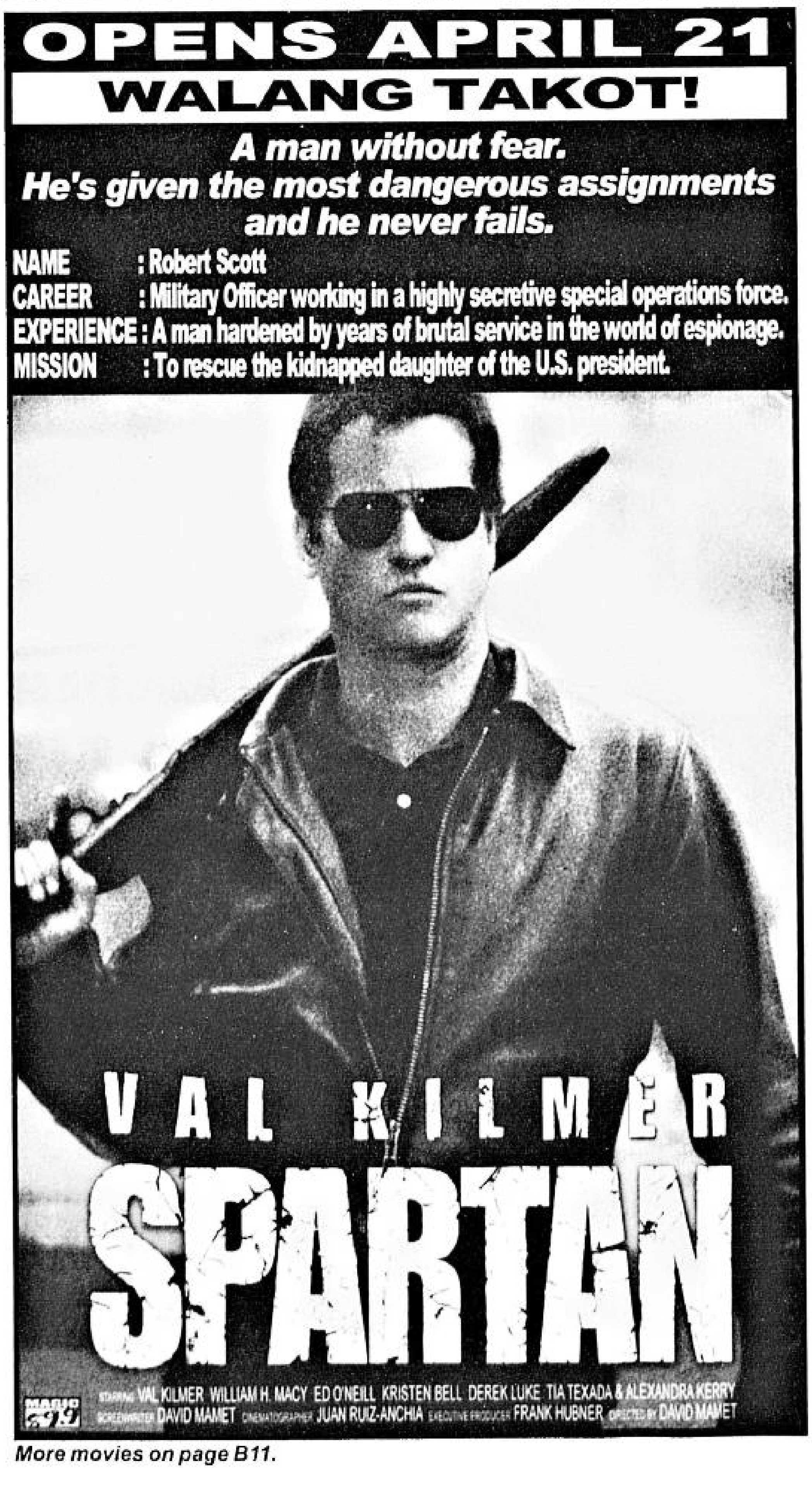
"Definitely hold your breath because you haven't seen anything yet," adds Cunningham. "Expect a bigger, better, stronger presence of Nickelodeon in the Philippines."



OPENS APRIL 28
JIMMY "THE TULIP" IS BACK IN ACTION!
BRUCE WILLIS
The Whole Ten Yards

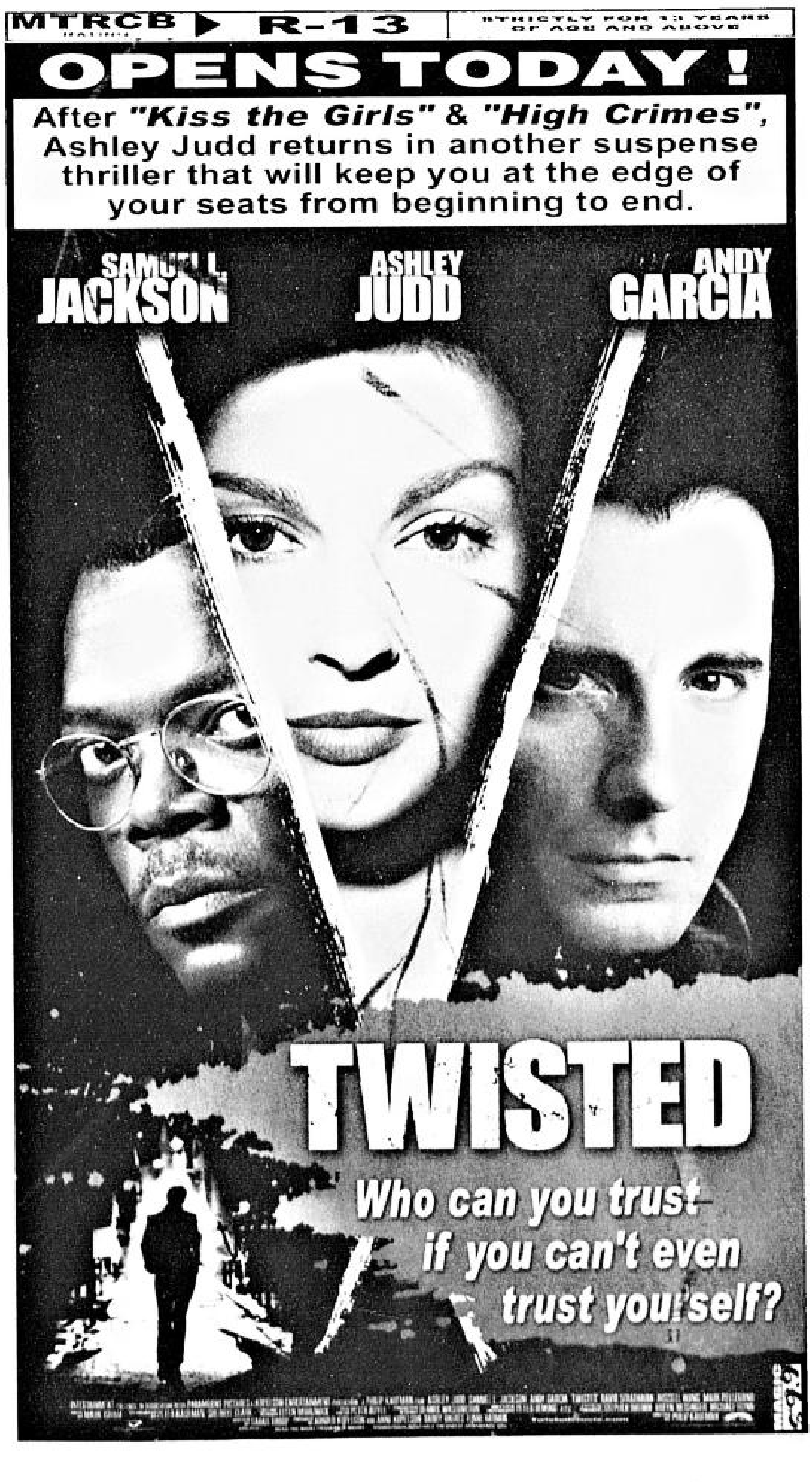


IIYAK KA SA KATATAWA
SUNSHINE DIZON JOHN LAPUZ and GINA PAREÑO introducing RUDY HATFIELD
ANTONIO AQUITANIA
rufa mae quinto
Masikip sa dibdib
Ang tunay na buhay ni Boobita Rose
With Special Guest Stars:
Ogie Alcasid
Blakdyak
Ely Buendia
Bituin Escalante
Anna Fegi
Gwen Garci
Sarah Geronimo
Kristine Jaca
Karylle
Kyla
Lani Misalucha
Martin Nievera
Nina
Andrea del Rosario
Salbakuta
Ella V.
and
Regine Velasquez
LEONARDO Directed by Bb Joyce Bernal VIVA
GRAND OPENING TODAY!



OPENS APRIL 21
WALANG TAKOT!
A man without fear. He's given the most dangerous assignments and he never fails.
NAME : Robert Scott
CAREER : Military Officer working in a highly secretive special operations force.
EXPERIENCE : A man hardened by years of brutal service in the world of espionage.
MISSION : To rescue the kidnapped daughter of the U.S. president.
VAL KILMER
SPARTAN
STARRING VAL KILMER WILLIAM H. MACY ED O'NEILL KRISTEN BELL DEREK LUKE TIA TEXADA & ALEXANDRA KERRY
SCREENWRITER DAVID MAMET CINEMATOGRAPHER JUAN RUIZ-ANCHIA EXECUTIVE PRODUCER FRANK HUBNER DIRECTED BY DAVID MAMET

More movies on page B11.



MTRCB R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND ABOVE
OPENS TODAY!
After "Kiss the Girls" & "High Crimes", Ashley Judd returns in another suspense thriller that will keep you at the edge of your seats from beginning to end.
SAMUEL L. JACKSON ASHLEY JUDD ANDY GARCIA
TWISTED
Who can you trust if you can't even trust yourself?

Blackmail propaganda and other boob-tube booboos

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(You need a visa to go to the *embassy*?!)

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(*Ay*, portable water!)

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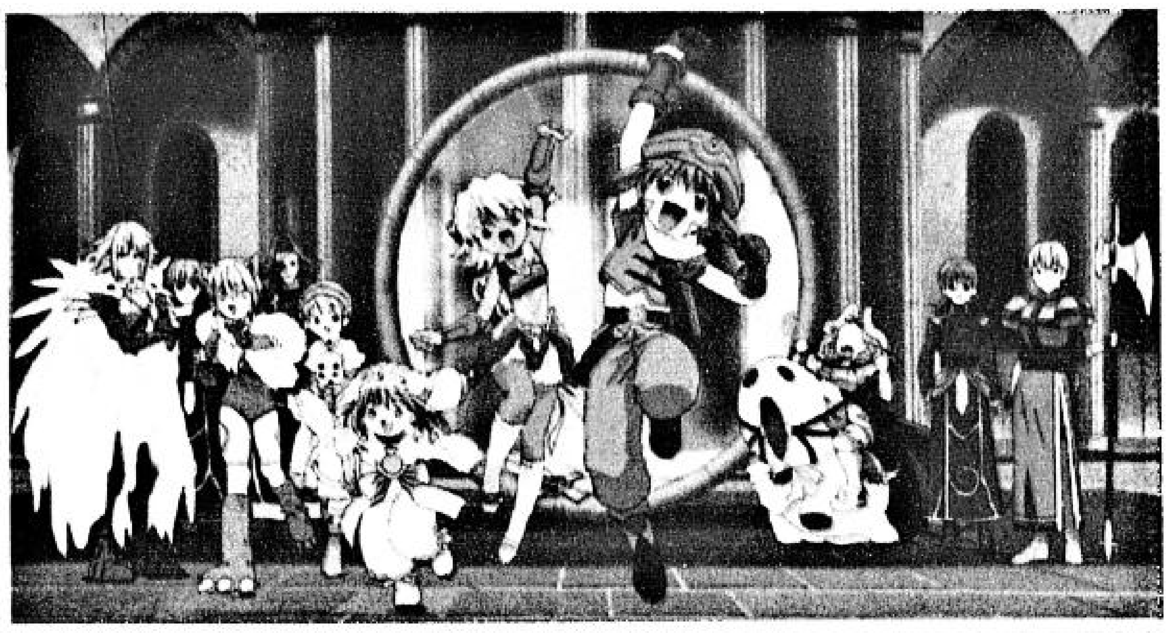

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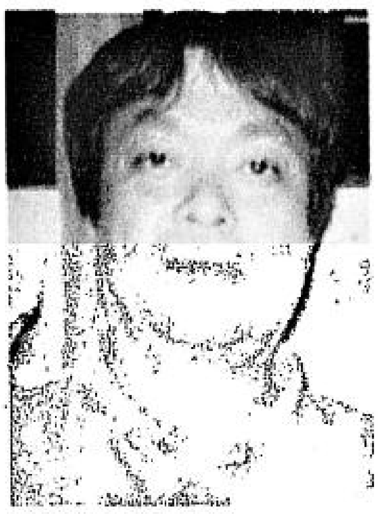

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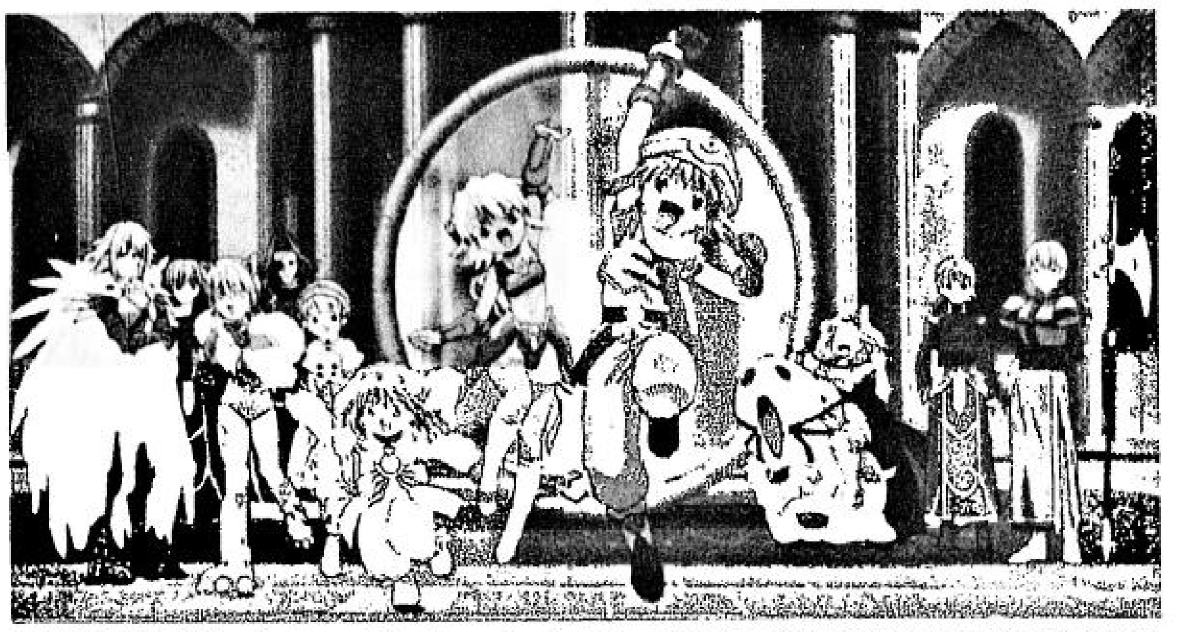

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ENTERTAINMENT

E-mail: pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Louie C. Camino

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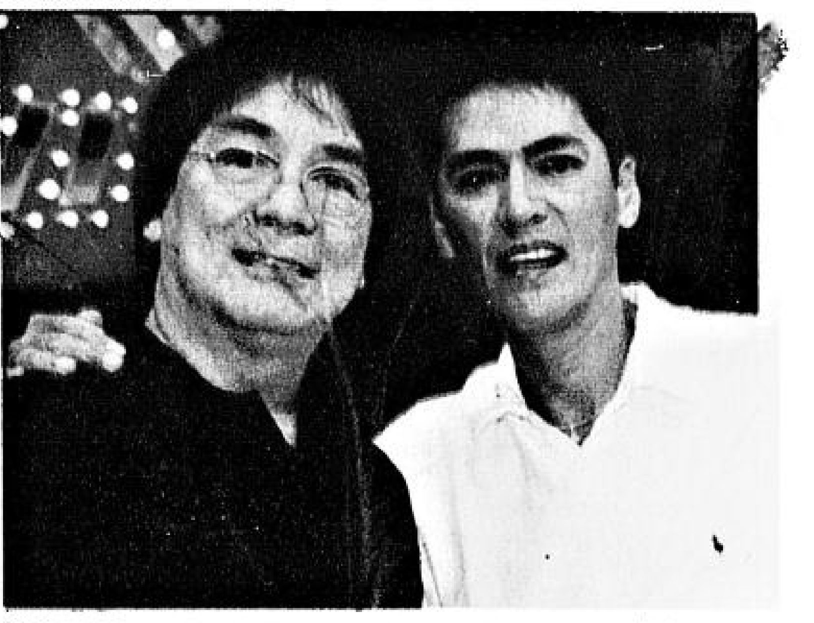

'BULAGA' hosts Joey de Leon and Vic Sotto. There was a 'slight delay' in the payment for airtime, according to GMA 7.

By Nini Valera and Marinel R. Cruz

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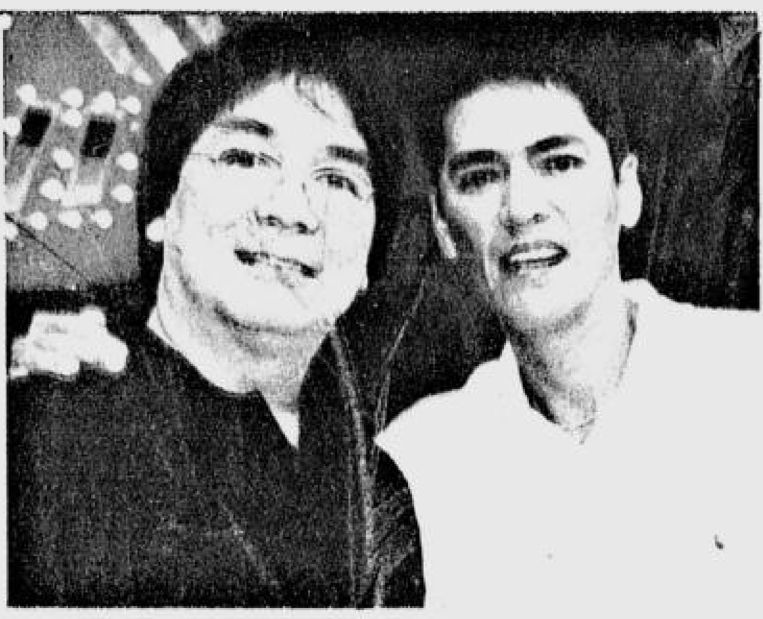

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WEDNESDAY,
APRIL 14, 2004

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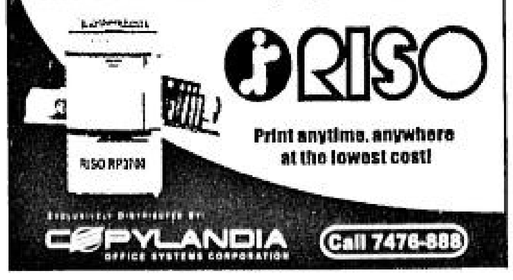
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Peso continues rally, closes at 55.80 to $1

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO yesterday bounced back to the 55 to $1 level, closing at 55.80 to $1, as banks scrambled to dispose of their dollar holdings.

This prompted the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to say that the worst may be over for the currency.

"The peso has recovered and will most likely remain stable. The fear of a (peso) freefall is no longer before us," BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said yesterday.

Buenaventura told reporters he was expecting the peso to be "range-bound" at around 56 to the dollar until election day, after which it should appreciate to 54-55 to $1 level.

The peso fell to a record low of 56.45 per dollar last month on pre-election jitters. It breached yesterday the psychological resistance at 56 to close at a new two-month high of 55.80 to $1.

Yesterday's trading indicated a hefty single-day gain of 33 centavos from Monday's close of 56.13 to $1. It was the peso's strongest finish since Jan. 27 this year when it closed at 55.75 to $1.

Value turnover at the spot foreign exchange market Philippine Dealing System swelled to $257.5 million from Monday's $101.5 as banks continued to trim their "long" dollar positions.

Buenaventura said the peso could even strengthen further to 54 after the presidential elections.

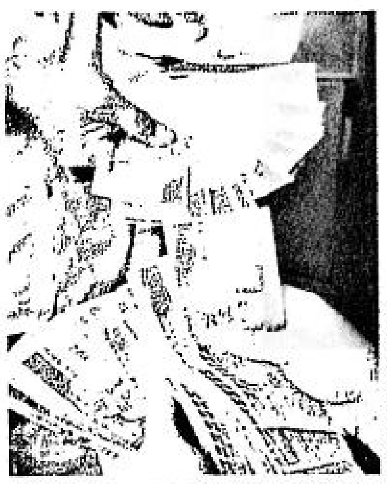
A trader from a local commercial bank said the positive momentum would allow the peso to test the next resistance levels of 55.50-55.60 to $1.

Buenaventura said he was right all along in saying previously that the peso's depreciation was temporary. He cited several positive factors working in favor of the local currency.

"With the political noise abating, exports picking up and investment inflows rebounding, the peso is seen to continue its recovery," the BSP chief said.

The BSP recently accepted an

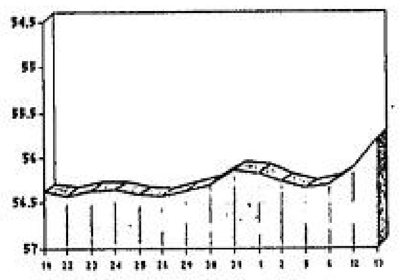
PESO/ B2


EPA DENNIS SABANGAN

PESO seen at 54-55 to $1 after polls.

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 55.80 = $1

As of 5 p.m., April 13, 2004

¥ 105.65= $1

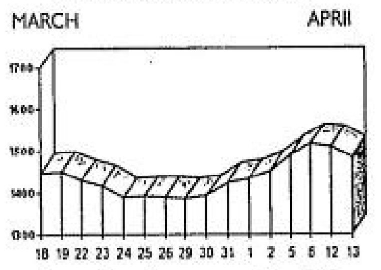
As of 5 p.m., April 13, 2004

GOLD: $416.90-417.40

per ounce Hong Kong, April 13, 2004

STOCK MARKET

Shares close lower



(See stock market report on Page B2)

STOCKS ended lower in a technical correction for the second straight day yesterday, but traders said there was a good chance the earnings-driven rally seen in recent weeks would resume soon.

Selling was broad-based but decent trading volume suggested there was still momentum for an upturn despite political and economic worries ahead of the May national elections, they said.

Most blue chip stocks back-pedaled, led by top local telecom firm Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT), which headed the six-day rally before the long Easter break last week.

PLDT, like most blue chips, had gained due to expectations of good first-quarter profits. Some big corporations are likely to start releasing their earnings results next week.

"We've gone up too much before the Holy Week so the correction was expected," said Allan Araullo, vice president at Regina Capital Development Corp.

Araullo said major resistance was pegged at 1,540 to 1,550 points in the main index.

The Philippine stock index lost 25.11 points or 1.66 percent to 1,485.47. The market is up by a slim 2.99 percent so far this year.

Value turnover slowed to P603.74 million against P705.11 million yesterday, with losers in a three to one majority.

Traders said the market shrugged off news that President Macapagal-Arroyo had taken a significant lead over her closest rival actor Fernando Poe for the first time in the latest opinion poll ahead of the national elections.

Reuters

BOI-approved investments up 1,334% in 1st quarter

By Ronnel W. Domingo

BOARD of Investments-registered investments in the first quarter rose by a hefty 1,334 percent to P108 billion from only P7.5 billion in the same period last year.

Trade Secretary Cesar V. Purisima said in a statement that 99 percent of the amount, or P106.8 billion, represented the cost of "one-time" projects approved. These are capital-intensive projects that are not expected to be generated yearly. These include infrastructure, build-operate-transfer and telecom projects.

Purisima said the growth was fueled by big-ticket projects in electricity generation.

The biggest of which was GNPower Ltd.'s P96.52-billion combined cycle power plant that will run on liquefied natural gas. The other major power ventures approved were PNOC Energy Development Corp.'s geothermal projects—the P5.4-billion Negros project and the P2.58-billion Palinpinon 2 optimization project, and Northwind Power Development Corp.'s P2.32-billion wind power project in Northern Luzon.

GNPower's 1,200-megawatt power plant in Bataan is a joint venture between Nauru-based Power Partners Ltd. and local firm PMR Ltd. Co.

Approved investments in regular projects in the first quarter amounted to P1.22 billion or 59 percent lower than the amount generated in the same period of 2003.

"The bulk of the capital investments (P97.52 billion) approved by the BoI were from foreign sources," Purisima said. "This manifests the renewed business confidence of foreign investors in our economy despite election anxieties."

Local investors, for their part, committed to finance projects worth P10.74 billion.

In terms of sectors, manufacturing accounts for P794 million in investments while information technology represents P276 million.

A total of 34 projects were approved

BOI-APPROVED/ B5

BIR collection exceeds goal

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue, the government's main collection agency, said it had collected P33.6 billion in March, surpassing its revenue goal for the period by P1.4 billion.

The collection in March trimmed the BIR's shortfall for the first quarter to P2.11 billion from P3.52 billion as of February.

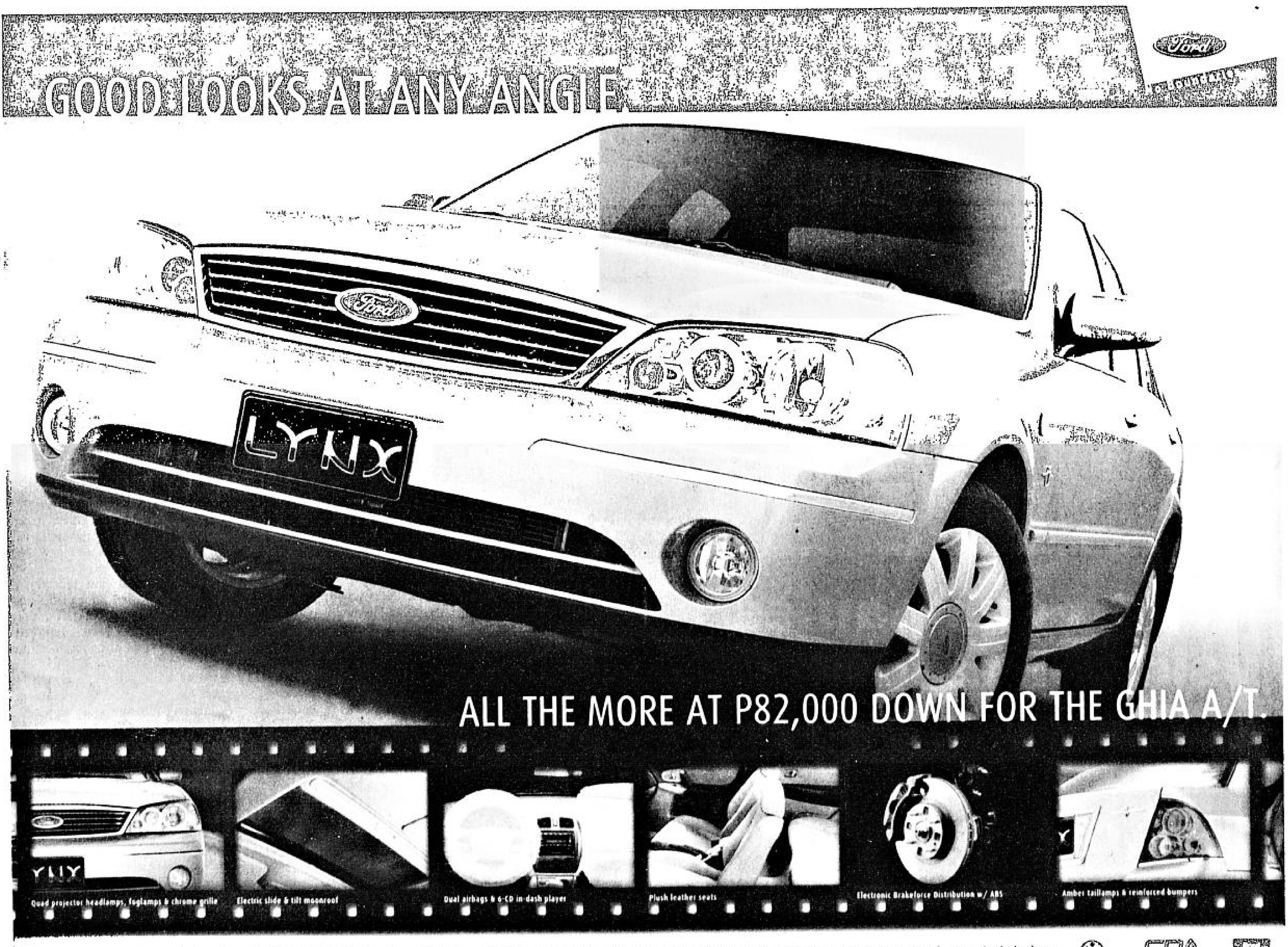
For the first three months of the year, the BIR—which contributes 85 percent of the government's earnings—yielded P98.974 billion, a growth of 10.1 percent from a year ago.

Revenue collection for the month of March, alone, represented about 17.3 percent or P4.95 billion growth from month-ago level.

"The bureau remains bullish that it can sustain its strong monthly collections vis-a-vis this coming April and May," the BIR said in a statement yesterday.

April 15 is the deadline for filing both corporate and individual income taxes for the year 2003 while May 30 is the deadline for filing the income tax for the first quarter of 2004.

Twelve of the bureau's 19 revenue regions and the large taxpayers' unit exceeded their respective goals for March. *Doris C. Dumlao*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Ayala Land unit eyes partner for Cebu project

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

CEBU Holdings Inc., a 47 percent-owned affiliate of property giant Ayala Land Inc. (ALI), has agreed to team up with a local partner to develop a residential property in the northern part of Cebu.

The company said that certain conditions needed to be resolved in the next few months before the final document could be signed.

Sources could not immediately give an estimate of how much the project would cost since no agreement was forged yet.

CHI assistant corporate secretary Renan Osero said the project was envisioned to set a trend in property development to cater to a broad market range.

The real estate industry remained competitive in the Vizayas and Mindanao last year due to weak demand. Despite the slump, CHI continued to pursue growth opportunities in Bacolod and Cebu.

Aside from CHI, the Ayala Group continues to invest in Cebu through Cebu Properties Ventures and Development Corp., a 76 percent owned subsidiary of CHI.

Among the prime projects in the city and CHI's main revenue driver is Ayala Center Cebu, the centerpiece of its 50-hectare Cebu Business Park. Sales per square meter of building merchants and land leases grew 14 percent and 6 percent last year. New facilities such as a renovated cinema, a new foodcourt and an enhanced outdoor lagoon area have been lined up for this year.

The Cebu Business Park generated renewed interest from Cebu-based businessmen looking for new investment and expansion after it sold a 4,800 square meter property last year.

The business park to date remains the only location in Cebu that combines business, commercial, recreational, entertainment and high rise residential units.

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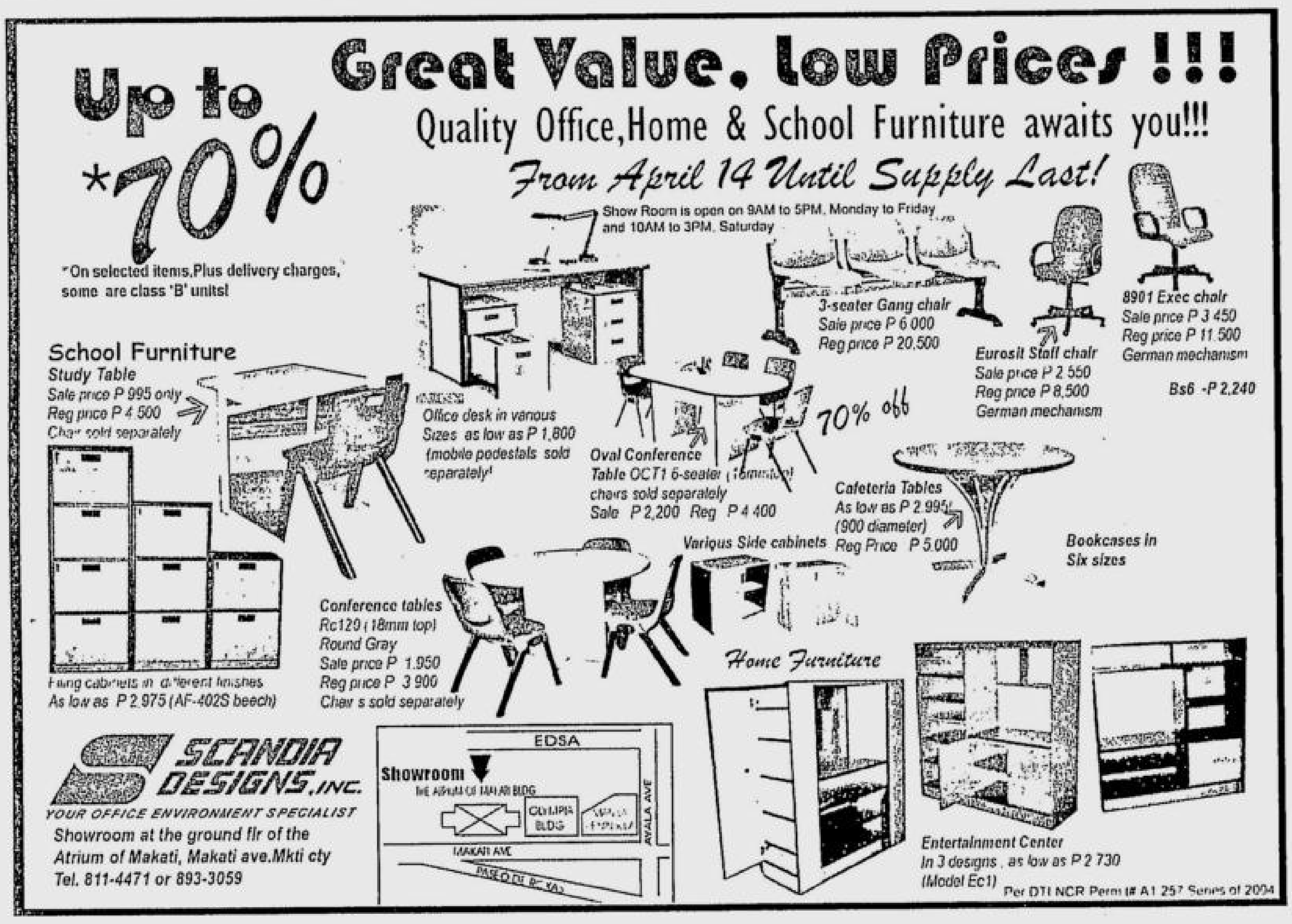
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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of April 13, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco De Oro Univ. Bank	16.75	17 25	16.75	17	155.300
Bank Of The Phil. Islands	46	46	44	44.5	291.500
China Banking Corp.	670	670	670	670	420
Equitable Pci Bank Inc.	40.5	40.5	40.5	40.5	17,700
Export And Ind. Bank Inc.	0.55	0.55	0.54	0.55	340.000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	24	24	23.75	23.75	386.000
Philippine National Bank	23.25	23.25	23 25	23.25	12.500
Security Bank Corp.	16.75	17	16.75	17	19.500
Union Bank Of The Phil.	24	24 5	24	24	549,300
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	136	136	136	136	300
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1545	1550	1545	1550	2,760
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	22	22	21.75	21.75	12.300
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.65	0.66	0.65	0.66	2,100.000
Globe Telecom Inc.	900	900	875	880	13.940
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	1.74	1.74	1.7	1.7	7,049.000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1080	1080	1050	1055	262.260
Philweb Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	20,300,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	18	18 25	17.75	18	64.500
Manila Electric Co. B	26.5	26.5	25.5	25.5	1,163.500
Petron Corp.	3 05	3 05	2 95	2.95	4,638,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14	52,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Union Cement Corp.	1.62	1.8	1 62	1.76	975,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3	3	3	3	1,264,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	28.5	29	28.5	29	6.500
Jollibee Foods Corp.	19	19	18.25	18.75	221,100
San Miguel Pure Foods A	55	55	55	55	100
RFM Corp.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	10.000
Swift Food Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	100.000
San Miguel Corp. A	57	57	57	57	225.100
San Miguel Corp. B	72	72	70	71	195.900
Universal Robina Corp.	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	5,731,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0 26	0.26	0.26	450,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.29	0 29	0.29	0.29	10,000
Ayala Corp.	5.2	5.4	5	5	4,546,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.85	2.85	2.8	2.8	82,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1	1	1	1	20,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	0.74	0.74	0.74	0.74	20,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.52	0.52	0.5	0.5	5,730,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	22	22	21.75	22	510,200
Global Equities Inc.	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	200,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.78	1.78	1.78	1.78	110,000
Macroasia Corp.	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	20.000
Medco Holdings	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	120.000
Megaworld Corp.	1.14	1.14	1.12	1.12	3,190,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.25	0 26	1,370,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	14.75	14.75	14.75	14.75	7,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co	0.06	0 06	0 06	0 06	100.000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0 08	0 08	0 08	0.08	200,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
CEN Azucar De Tarlac	3.4	4.7	3.4	4.7	10.000
Matsushita Elec Phil Corp.	8.5	8.5	8.5	8.5	30.000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.16	1.16	92.000
Steniel Manufacturing	0 1	0.1	0 1	0.1	1,400,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.48	0 48	0 48	0.48	90.000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.25	0.25	0 25	0.25	50.000
Philippine Racing Club	3	3	3	3	200,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	22	22	21 25	22	160,300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series H	10	10	10	10	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series S	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	600
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.5	10 5	10.5	10.5	300
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	6	6	6	6	9.000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.4	5 5	5.4	5.5	3,649.000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.12	0 12	0 12	0 12	300.000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.21	0.215	0.21	0.21	1,250.000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.06	1.06	1.04	1.04	365.000
Kuok Phil Properties	0 185	0.185	0.185	0.185	70.000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.0925	0.1	0.08	0.08	39,900,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	1.76	1.78	1.76	1.76	223.000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6	6	5.7	5.8	10,635,000
MINING					
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	1	1	1	1	500.000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0 21	0.21	0 21	0 21	70.000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0 005	0 005	0 005	0 005	13,000.000
Omico Corp.	0.0026	0.0026	0.0026	0.0026	3,000.000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	480.000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	75,000,000

CURRENCIES

April 13, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.828157	1.000000	56.1840
Japan	Yen	0.007860	0.009491	0.5332
United Kingdom	Pound	1.522981	1.839000	103.3224
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.106238	0.128282	7.2074
Switzerland	Franc	0.645787	0.779788	43.8116
Canada	Dollar	0.620064	0.748727	42.0665
Singapore	Dollar	0.497272	0.600456	33 7360
Australia	Dollar	0.635284	0.767106	43.0991
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.196762	2.652590	149.0331
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.220848	0.266674	14.9828
Brunei	Dollar	0.495784	0.598659	33.6351
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000096	0.000116	0.0065
Thailand	Baht	0.021137	0.025523	1.4340
UAE	Dirham	0.225472	0.272257	15.2965
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.207500	67.8422
Argentina	Peso	0.295506	0.356824	20.0478
Brazil	Real	0.287056	0.346620	19.4745
Denmark	Kroner	0.134323	0.162195	9.1128
India	Rupee	0.018977	0.022915	1.2875
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.217965	0.263193	14.7872
Mexico	New Peso	0.073738	0.089039	5.0026
New Zealand	Dollar	0.548667	0.662515	37.2227
Norway	Kroner	0.118975	0.143662	8.0715
Pakistan	Rupee	0.014414	0.017405	0.9779
South Africa	Rand	0.131663	0.158983	8.9323
Korea	Won	0.000725	0.000876	0.0492
Sweden	Kroner	0.109000	0.131617	7.3948
Syria	Pound	0.018745	0.022635	1.2717
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025310	0.030562	1.7171
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000432	0.000522	0.0293

ABI beer sales up 40%

BUOYED by increased demand and enhanced distribution system, Asia Brewery Inc. (ABI) posted hefty gains in its beer sales during the first quarter of 2004.

A performance report released by the company showed that ABI's sales volume during the first three months of 2004 surged to nearly 8 million cases or an increase of almost 40 percent compared to the same period last year. The significant growth was mainly driven by an 80-percent jump in the sales of Colt 45, ABI's premium strong beer, and a 25 percent up tick in the sales volume of Beer na Beer, the firm's flagship brand.

Metro-Manila registered the biggest growth of 88 percent in beer sales during the quarter, followed by Mindanao, 30 percent; Visayas, 28 percent, and the rest of Luzon, 26 percent, the company said in a statement.

ABI attributes the growth in beer sales to creative marketing as well as the introduction of new beer products. These include Lone Star Light; Lone Star Ultra , the country's first low carbohydrate light beer, and Colt Ice, a super-chilled, slow-brewed and ice-filtered strong beer.

Aggressive distribution strategies also enabled ABI to penetrate more outlets, especially in areas where beer drinkers demand value for money.

Peso continues rally . . .

From page B1

offer from a syndicate of local banks for a $500-million fresh credit, easing concerns over the country's dwindling foreign exchange reserves. Inflows from other fresh public sector foreign borrowings have likewise improved the outlook on the country's balance of payment or external position.

Buenaventura said he was expecting a minimal volatility, if any, with the local currency likely to be locked in a tight range near 56 to $1 over the near term.

Boosting the peso were inflows from portfolio investments and overseas Filipino workers, whose remittances rose in the second quarter in time for the opening of the school year in June.

Peso assets are likewise becoming more attractive as local interest rates were rising. The BSP hinted, however, that no monetary tightening was expected during its next policy rate setting on April 12 even as it continued to closely watch other factors that could spike up consumer prices.

He said the peso movement was just among the factors that could affect the inflation rate, noting that other variables—like wage and oil price increases—were not at all influenced by monetary policy.

HSBC to set up backroom unit in RP to serve global operations

By Doris C. Dumlao

BRITISH bank HSBC Ltd. yesterday announced plans to invest "several millions of dollars" in a backroom unit in the Philippines that will call center and business process outsourcing for its global operations.

In a press briefing, HSBC Philippines chief executive officer Warner Manning announced that HSBC Electronic Data Processing Inc., the eighth group service center in Asia, would open in the middle of this year.

HSBC, one of the first foreign banks to set foot in the Philippines, has other existing group service centers in India, China and Malaysia. A site in Sri Lanka is likewise under development.

Commitment

"HSBC has had a presence in the Philippines for close to 130 years. Our decision to open a group service center in Manila reflects our longstanding commitment to the country and our confidence in its prospects," Manning said.

"High quality telecommunications infrastructure and excellent English-language skills are the building blocks of this business, and both are freely available in the Philippines," he added.

The new call center and BPO unit will temporarily locate at the PBCom Tower in Makati and move to its permanent site in Northgate Cyberzone, Alabang by mid-2005.

BOI-registered

Trade Secretary Cesar Purisima said HSBC's new backroom unit, having been registered under the Board of Investments would be entitled to certain fiscal incentives such as an income tax holiday.

"This is a badge of honor for the Philippine BPO and call center industry. We want to be a good number two in the world next to India," Purisima said.

"It not only highlights the quality of our local human resources, but demonstrates the continued viability of the Philippines as a place for doing business," he explained.

Job creation

He said the average investment for call centers in the country ranged between $3,000 and $6,000 per seat.

Extracted from Purisima's estimates, HSBC's plan to hire an initial batch of 500 people meant that its new call center unit could accommodate about 360 seats requiring about $1 to $2 million in seed investments.

The bank's plan is to grow the backroom unit five-fold over the next two years, implying $5 to $10 million in fresh investments to the country.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura said HSBC's new expansion plan would create fresh job opportunities and attract more foreign banks and financial institutions to similarly transfer some, if not all, of their backroom operations to the country.

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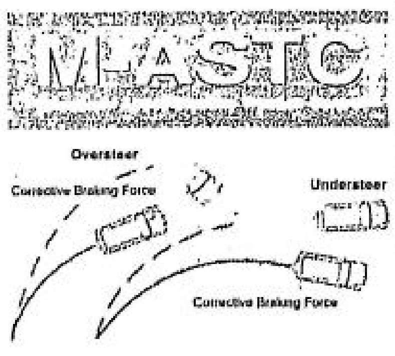

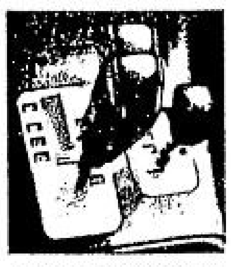

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RP ports to meet new security rules–DOTC

By Clarissa S. Batino

PHILIPPINE ports would meet the new global standards on security and anti-terrorism on or before July this year.

Transport Secretary Leandro Mendoza made the assurance yesterday as the July 1 target for the effectivity of the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code sanctioned by the United Nations draws near.

The code covers all vessels over 500 gross tonnage plying international routes.

It calls for stricter measures against terrorism and tighter port security following the September 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States.

"Failure to comply with the code will not only undermine the security standard for our ships and ports facilities but also cause serious adverse effects on the commercial operations of shipping and port industries of our country," said Mendoza.

Ships falling short of the requirements could be turned away from a port while vessels could refuse to dock at ports that fail to comply with the code.

Alfonso Cusi, general manager of the Philippine Ports Authority, said the country could comply with the new international standards as early as May.

The PPA, according to Cusi, had required even major port operators like the International Container Terminal Services Inc. and Asian Terminals Inc. to meet and even exceed the requirements of the ISPS.

Nenaco urges DFA to help resolve row with Tsuneishi

SHIPPING firm Negros Navigation Co. has asked the Department of Foreign Affairs to resolve its row with Tsuneishi Heavy Industries Inc. by declaring three of its officials as persona non grata.

The declaration will prohibit the foreign nationals from doing business in the Philippines.

In separate letters to DFA Secretary Delia Albert and Japanese Ambassador Kojiro Takano, Nenaco complained about the "dishonorable conduct" of Tsuneishi president Kenji Kawano, managing director Katsuhiro Danjo and sales manager Kenji Seo.

"These Japanese nationals deserve to be declared persona non grata and ought to be repatriated back to your country at the soonest possible time. We strongly deplore and condemn this unethical conduct," said Nenaco president Conrad Carballo in his letter.

Carballo, in his letter to the DFA and the Japanese Embassy, stated that Tsuneishi insisted on seizing one of Nenaco's vessels during the Holy Week despite a stay order issued by the Manila Regional Trial Court following the shipping firm's petition for rehabilitation.

"We deplore the manner in which Tsuneishi ordered its representatives to seize our boats during the weekend nearly leaving thousands of passengers stranded in the ports, all over the Philippines," Nenaco said in a statement.

Nenaco owes Tsuneishi more than P100 million for dry docking services.

"We have been paying but due to the tight economic situation and the financial crunch we are experiencing, we have been unable to pay in accordance with the agreed payment terms," the Nenaco president admitted.

He added, however, that Nenaco had offered to restructure its P2.5 billion in debt to creditors and suppliers including Tsuneishi.

Clarissa S. Batino

NOTICE TO SHAREHOLDERS OF SPI TECHNOLOGIES, INC.

All shareholders of SPI Technologies, Inc. ("SPI") are hereby notified that on April 5, 2004, **THLPV ACQUISITION, L.P.** ("the Bidder") has filed a Tender Offer Report (SEC Form 19-1) with the Securities and Exchange Commission ("SEC") and the Philippine Stock Exchange ("PSE") pursuant to Section 19 of the Securities Regulation Code. The Bidder, which is a limited partnership organized in the State of Delaware, U.S.A., intends to acquire, through a wholly-owned Philippine subsidiary it intends to establish for the purpose during the Tender Offer Period, 100% of the fully diluted share capital of SPI (the "Shares")

The Tender Offer shall commence at 9:00 a.m. on April 12, 2004 and end at 3:00 p.m. on May 7, 2004 (the "Tender Offer Period"). The Shares are intended to be crossed on the PSE on May 20, 2004.

Should any of the business days during the period from April 12, 2004, the commencement of the Tender Offer Period and May 20, 2004, the Cross Date, inclusive, be officially declared a non-working holiday after the filing of the Tender Offer Report (SEC Form 19-1) on April 5, 2004, the period shall be extended by the number of business days corresponding to those which were declared as non-working holidays.

The purchase price for the acquisition of the Shares is US$87.230 million or US$0.2794 for each share and will be payable in US Dollars. SPI's shareholders who wish to convert their US Dollar proceeds into Philippine Pesos at the exchange rate to be quoted by Hongkong Shanghai Banking Corporation (the "Paying Agent") should so indicate in their Application to Tender. The exchange rate will be equivalent to the weighted average rate of all the Philippine Peso/US Dollar trades transacted at the Philippine Dealing System as of 11:30 a.m. one business day prior to the payment date for the tendered SPI shares, minus PhP0.05 for every US$1.00.

ATR-Kim Eng Capital Partners, Inc., the Bidder's advisor, has received confirmation from the legal counsel to TH Lee Putnam Ventures, L.P., who owns 100% of the Bidder, and TH Lee Putnam Parallel Ventures, L.P. (the "Funds") that, based solely on the records of the Funds as of March 22, 2004, the Funds have an aggregate of approximately US$349.7 million in uncalled capital commitments which may be called upon with ten business days prior written notice. The foregoing confirmation indicates that resources are available to the Bidder sufficient to satisfy full acceptance of the Tender Offer.

The Bidder intends to pay the tendered and accepted shares on May 20, 2004. Payments for the tendered and accepted shares shall be made available by the Paying Agent for pick up by the tendering shareholders after 3:00 p.m. of May 20, 2004 at the following address: HSBC Trust Department, 30/F Discovery Centre, 25 ADB Avenue, Ortigas Centre, Pasig City. Contact person: Junji Arias (63-2) 683-2743.

Every shareholder of SPI is entitled to tender all or a portion of his/its Shares for acceptance and purchase by the Bidder, subject to the Terms of the Tender Offer, copies of which will be sent to all Shareholders.

Tendering Shareholders who hold stock certificates ("Scrip Shareholders") should submit within the Tender Offer Period their duly endorsed stock certificates and the duly accomplished Application together with the following requirements to ATR-Kim Eng Securities, Inc. (the "Depository"), 17th Floor, Tower One & Exchange Plaza, Ayala Avenue, Makati City, Telephone No. (63-2) 849-8888 (Contact Person: Nilaida S. Enriquez):

If you are an INDIVIDUAL SHAREHOLDER, please submit the following, personally or through your attorney-in-fact.	If you are a CORPORATE SHAREHOLDER, Please submit the following.
1. Two (2) valid identification cards containing the photo and specimen signature of the shareholder.	1. Certified true copies of the Articles of Incorporation and By-laws of the shareholder and latest amendment/s thereof.
2. For shareholders acting through an attorney-in-fact, a duly notarized Special Power of Attorney substantially in the form prescribed by the Bidder (*N.B.* Endorsement of stock certificate/s must be made by the shareholder himself).	2. A notarized Secretary's Certificate substantially in the form prescribed by the Bidder setting forth resolutions of the tendering shareholder's Board of Directors authorizing the tender and sale of SPI Shares and designating the signatories for the purpose.
3. A duly accomplished signature card containing the specimen signature of the shareholder and verified by his broker (the name of the broker and the broker's signatory must be specified) or officer of the bank (the name of the bank and the bank's officer must be specified) where he is maintaining an account.	3. A duly accomplished signature card containing the specimen signatures of its authorized signatories validated by the Corporate Secretary and verified by its broker (the name of the broker and the broker's signatory must be specified) or officer of the bank (the name of the bank and the bank's officer must be specified) where it is maintaining an account.

For the convenience of Scrip Shareholders based in Visayas and Mindanao, SPI shares may be tendered by submitting the foregoing requirements at the Cebu and Davao branch offices of the Depository not later than April 30, 2004.

ATR-Kim Eng Securities, Inc.
Cebu Branch
Mezzanine Floor, TPG Center
Escario cor. F. Ramos Sts.
Cebu City
Telephone No.: (63-32) 255-1888
Contact Person: [Cheryl M. Lim]

ATR-Kim Eng Securities, Inc.
Davao Branch
Dr. #7 M.T. Aquino Building
Cabaguio Avenue Corner
Bolcan Street, Davao City
Telephone No.: (63-82) 224-2860
Contact Person: Miguel Luis R. Aquino

After said dates, Scrip Shareholders in Visayas and Mindanao may tender their shares only with the Depository's head office in Makati City.

The Depository will submit the share certificates for validation to SPI's Stock Transfer Agent: Union Bank of the Philippines, c/o Mr. Moises L. Almanon, Jr., 3rd Floor, SSS Building, Ayala Avenue, Makati City, Telephone No. (63-2) 893-8584 or (63-2) 892-0011, Local 2351/2352. Defective applications (*e.g.*, with discrepancy between the specimen signatures on file and the endorsement) must be corrected within the Tender Offer Period to avoid being rejected by the Bidder. Hence, shareholders are strongly urged against tendering at the last minute to allow sufficient time to correct any deficiency in their application. Shareholders are also urged to indicate their telephone numbers in their respective application forms to allow the Depository to inform them immediately of any deficiency in their applications.

Tendering shareholders whose shares are lodged with the Philippine Central Depository Nominee Corporation ("PCD") ("Scripless Shareholders") should instruct their brokers to electronically transfer their shares to ATR-Kim Eng Securities, Inc. (the "Broker") for receipt by the Broker prior to 3:00 p.m. of May 7, 2004. The Broker shall hold the tendered common shares only as custodian for said shares.

Tendering shareholders shall have the right to withdraw any tendered shares at any time during the Tender Offer Period. For a withdrawal to be effective, a written notice of withdrawal must be received by the Depository (for Scrip Shareholders) or by the Broker (for Scripless Shareholders) before 3:00 p.m. of May 7, 2004.

Copies of SEC Form 19-1 and the tender offer application kit may be obtained by Shareholders from the Depository/Broker at their addresses stated above. Copies of SEC Form 19-1 may also be downloaded by the Shareholders from SPI's website www.spitech.com. Copies of this letter, along with the Application and the attachments, will be sent to the shareholders of record as of March 16, 2004 by personal delivery or registered mail.

For inquiries about the Bidder or the Tender Offer, please contact **Platon Martinez Flores San Pedro & Leaño** at (63-2) 887-4696 or **Ms. Nilaida Enriquez** of the Depository at its address set forth earlier in this letter.

(PDI- April 12, 13 & 14, 2004)

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BUSINESS

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

PAL poaches back

PHILIPPINE Airlines, which had been complaining of regional airlines "poaching" on the local market, is playing the same market-snatching game overseas.

The flag carrier is offering a buy-one, take-one free business class passage out of Bangkok to Los Angeles, San Francisco, Sydney and Melbourne.

Here's the kicker. The Bangkok business class fare, which transits through Manila, is even cheaper than the buy-one, take-one business class ticket PAL is offering out of Manila to the same destinations.

The Bangkok-Los Angeles/San Francisco fare, for instance, costs 131,720 baht, or about $3,368 (or $1,684/person). The similar Manila business class promo to the same West Coast cities and Vancouver, on the other hand, costs $3,518 (or $1,759/person).

The Bangkok promotion is good up to May 31, while the Manila promo, which was supposed to have been only a low-season offering, has been extended indefinitely.

The Manila promo ticket, once issued, is valid up to six months. The twin ticket holders must travel together out of Manila, but may choose to return separately any date except Dec. 11 to 23, when the *balikbayan* invasion is at its peak.

Iraqi contingent

FOR fear of making the Filipino workers terrorist targets, the GMA government has chosen to keep quiet about its relative success in deploying Filipino workers in the strife-torn Iraq.

But, according to the official grapevine, the country has already sent about 3,000 workers to Iraq since the fall of Saddam a year ago. The largest contingent, about 600, has been employed to wash and press the uniforms of the American and multinational troops.

Pirated from Kalinisan and other laundry-dry cleaning businesses, the employees receive $350 net/month salary, plus free food and housing, and roundtrip airline passage for the duration of the contract.

In the engineering and construction sectors, Middle East veterans FF Cruz and EEI are tipped to win substantial subcontracting contracts following the successful return of Asiakonstruct to the war-torn country.

Since the Iraqi market reopened, Asiakonstruct has deployed 90 engineers, architects and secretaries, all recruited and flown to their respective sites without the workers being charged a single cent.

Another batch of 16 construction professionals is currently on hold, given the fresh round of hostage-taking incidents in the Iraqi countryside that now unfortunately target even foreign civilian workers.

Political players

- YUCHENGCO sisters Susan and Yvonne, who in the past volunteered as Namfrel poll watchers, have this time registered themselves as poll watchers for the administration party Lakas.
- KNP chief fundraisers for Cebu, Douglas LuYm and Victor Chiongbian, are grumbling they could put together only P10 million for campaign expenses for the entire island-province.

Heard through the grapevine

PLDT chair Manuel V. Pangilinan was in Bangkok Holy Thursday and Good Friday for a possible joint acquisition by First Pacific and the PLDT group of an ailing Thai mobile phone company.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)

Smart, Sun Cellular seek frequencies

By Clarissa S. Batino

MOBILE phone firms Smart Communications Inc. and Digitel's Sun Cellular are seeking additional frequencies to widen their coverage and increase their subscriber base.

Frequencies determine the network capacity of a cellular network. The more frequencies a mobile firm has, the more subscribers it could accommodate.

Smart Communications and Sun Cellular, a subsidiary of the Gokongwei-owned Digitel Mobile Phils. Inc., separately filed their applications before the National Telecommunications Commission seeking an additional five megahertz of frequencies under the 1800 bandwidth.

The 5 megahertz is the only frequency left after the NTC re-allocated the frequencies under the 1800 bandwidth in 2001.

NTC director Edgardo Cabarios explained that lack of mobile phone frequencies may bog down the networks of cellular firms.

"Smart, being the largest mobile phone firm to date, needs additional frequencies to accommodate its growing number of subscribers," Cabarios said.

In its application, Sun Cellular said it needed the additional frequencies to penetrate the Visayas and Mindanao markets. Sun Cellular already has 15 megahertz of frequency.

Sun Cellular's network could handle 2.4 million subscribers this year from a capacity of 1.2 million in 2003, although the company's subscriber base only stood at about 650,000 against its forecast of 800,000.

This year, the Gokongwei company said subscribers would reach about 2 million.

In Metro Manila, Sun Cellular has built over 240 cell sites. It plans to double this number toward the end of the year.

Smart earlier said it could handle 16 million subscribers by the end of this month. Smart has 25 megahertz of frequency.

As of February, subscribers of Smart and Pilipino Telephone Corp.'s Talk N' Text have already reached more than 13 million. By yearend, subscribers of the sister firms are seen to grow to 18 million.

Globe Telecom has 20 megahertz of frequency. As of end-2003, the Ayala-owned firm posted a total of 8.9 million mobile phone subscribers.

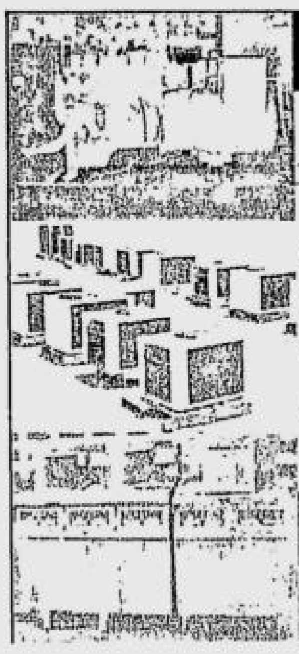
BOI-approved ...

From page B1

from January to March, which are expected to create some 5,100 jobs once the are fully operational.

Purisima said: "The growth in our first quarter investments right in the middle of the election season shows that we are on the right track in our investments strategy. This belies the opinion of some businessmen of a wait-and-see mode in investments."

He said the government was optimistic that the trend in investments would likely be sustained in the succeeding three quarters of the year.



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Oil firms seen to raise gas prices by 70¢/liter

By Abigail L. Ho

MOTORISTS should brace themselves for a 70-centavo hike in pump prices of gasoline expected to take effect during the weekend.

Fernando Martinez, Independent Philippine Petroleum Companies Association (IPPCA) chair, yesterday said during a telephone interview that even with the 60-centavo increase in gasoline pump prices last month, high prices in the world market would leave oil firms with no choice but to raise prices again.

To date, the price of unleaded gasoline, based on the Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS) benchmark for finished products, stands at $43.67 per barrel.

While lower than the March average of $44.10 per barrel, Martinez said that this is still high, burdening the new oil players who have yet to recover costs of around 60 centavos per liter of gasoline.

"We can't hold out any longer," Martinez said. "We still have under-recoveries of 60 centavos per liter. The high MOPS-based price will continue to add to that, and will likely bring our under-recoveries up to P1.20."

As a result, he said a 70-centavo hike in gasoline pump prices should be implemented "not any later than this weekend."

However, he did say that the new players would also have to watch whatever move the bigger oil players would make.

Roberto Kanapi, Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. general manager for external affairs, said during a separate interview that they are still adopting a "wait-and-see attitude" to a possible price adjustment.

But Kanapi did admit that the decision of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec) to cut production by one million barrels per day starting April 1 is already being felt by the market via the rising price of the benchmark Dubai crude.

As of April 12, the Dubai crude was pegged at $30.28 per barrel. While slightly lower than the March average of $30.87 per barrel, Kanapi said this month-to-date average already reflected a steady climb over the past three days, a little more than a week after the Opec announced its production cut.

"Oil prices have started to move up over the past three days," Kanapi said. "We're beginning to feel the effects of that production cut. But we're still monitoring the situation. We have no advise yet from management (whether to increase pump prices)."

Another oil refiner, Petron Corp., said it was also still "evaluating" the situation before making any concrete decisions.

As for diesel, Martinez said oil firms would have to continue to bear the costs they incurred from the rise in world market prices because of the social sensitivity of the product.

"We still have under-recoveries of between 60 centavos and 90 centavos for diesel as we have not increased diesel prices in the past months," Martinez said. "But we still won't be increasing diesel prices because it's really socially sensitive."

The MOPS-based price of diesel stood at a month-to-date average of $40.73, more than $2 higher than the March average of $38.42.

RP eggs up for export to countries hit by bird flu

By Christine Gaylican

PHILIPPINE poultry companies are looking into the possibility of exporting hatching eggs to other Asian countries that were badly hit by the bird flu disease.

Local broiler companies led by San Miguel Foods Inc., Swift Foods Inc., Tyson-Agro-Ventures Inc., Universal Robina Corp. and Vitarich Corp. are planning to export their products to South Korea, Vietnam, Thailand, Japan, Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia, Hong Kong and parts of China, where millions of chicken were killed after they were infected with the deadly avian flu strain H5N1.

The large agribusiness firms mentioned are members of the Philippine Association of Broiler Integrators Inc. (Pabi)., which has been exporting whole dressed chicken products to Japan.

Pabi officials estimated that about 60,000 to 80,000, may be up for export abroad.

The Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei are the only countries in Asia that have been spared the avian flu.

Last year the local broiler industry exported some 51,642 hatching eggs to Malaysia and Indonesia.

Two other Asian countries, Vietnam and South Korea, have signified interest in importing dressed chicken from the Philippines.

SEC told to lay off country club row

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez
and Vincent Cabreza,
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—The Court of Appeals has ordered the Securities and Exchange Commission to stay out of a dispute that has plagued the Baguio Country Club (BCC) three years after the death of its major stockholder, Potenciano Ilusorio.

Saying it "acted beyond its jurisdiction," the appellate court's special 15th division ruled in a March 26 decision that the SEC could not compel the BCC to hold government-supervised polls to elect a new set of directors.

In a 13-page decision, a copy of which was furnished the INQUIRER, Associate Justice Rodrigo Cosico said the club's "intra-corporate" dispute should be heard by the regional trial court.

The court also nullified two SEC orders requiring the BCC to amend its by-laws and to hold its annual election meeting to name new members of its board.

The SEC order to amend the by-laws was meant to shorten the term of office of its board of directors to one year from two years.

The SEC acted on the petition of Ilusorio's widow, Erlinda, and son, Ramon, who questioned the two-year duration of the board's terms of office.

The family of the late Ilusorio had been battling for control of the club and his assets for decades.

Lawyer Federico Agcaoili, BCC president, said Ilusorio's widow and three children had apparently been fearful that the club's stock conversion would affect the value of their interests in the facility.

Agcaoili said the conversion was simply undertaken to reduce the club's tax cover.

The CA cited the new Securities Regulation Code (Republic Act No. 8799), which transferred to "courts of general jurisdiction" all "intra-corporate controversies."

It pointed out that Ramon Ilusorio's formal complaint on Sept. 27, 2002, regarding the incumbent board's term of office lent "credence to the view that this is actually an intra-corporate dispute."

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China economy seen to rise 9.5%

BEIJING—China's economy is estimated to have grown 9.5 percent in the first quarter, a ranking official said on Tuesday, two days before the official release of the data.

Xu Hongyuan, a leading researcher at the State Information Center, a government think tank, also forecast full-year growth of 9 percent, virtually unchanged from last year's 9.1 percent, according to the state-run Xinhua news agency.

He based the prediction on a slew of government statistics suggesting brisk economic activity in the first three months.

China's industrial output rose nearly 18 percent year-on-year in the first quarter, while imports surged 42 percent in the same period.

The momentum is likely to be maintained in the second quarter, with growth topping 10 percent, Xu was quoted as saying.

In the second half, growth is likely to slow to 8 percent, he said.

The Chinese government is scheduled to release official economic data for the first quarter at a briefing Thursday. *AFP*

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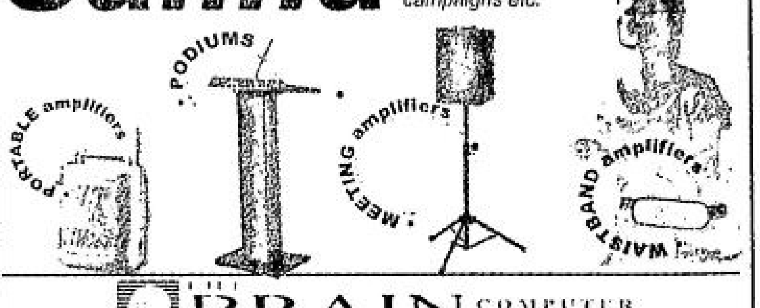

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Asia currencies rise against greenback

SINGAPORE—Asian regional currencies rose against the US dollar on Tuesday, with the Singapore dollar in the lead for the second day after the island tightened its currency-focused monetary policy.

The Singapore dollar rose as high as 1.6640 per US dollar, its strongest since January 2000 when it touched a 13-month high of 1.6450.

However dealers said there was some caution in the market after the island's central bank allegedly purchased US dollars late on Monday, apparently to prevent the Singapore dollar from rising too sharply.

Nevertheless, players were likely to keep testing the upper limits of the undisclosed trade-weighted policy band the Monetary Authority of Singapore uses to manage the currency.

The central bank surprised the market on Monday by announcing it had tightened policy to allow a modest and gradual appreciation of the currency. The MAS pointed to the risk of inflation with an improving growth outlook.

The move came on the back of a first quarter annualized gross domestic product growth rate of 11.0 percent, which prompted the Singapore government to say 2004 growth would exceed its forecast of 3.5 to 5.5 percent.

The Taiwan dollar touched 32.75 per dollar, its highest since March 2001, helped by a calmer political environment after recent violent street protests following the disputed March 20 presidential elections.

The South Korean won touched 1,140.3 per dollar, a 41-month high hit last week, but was capped by an early verbal warning against currency appreciation by authorities.

South Korean authorities have intervened in recent sessions to curb the won's strength.

The won eased to a five-session low of 10.8434 against the yen as the Japanese currency rose to challenge the 105 per dollar level.

Foreign investors have been net buyers of South Korean stocks for the last 13 consecutive session and have bought over 10 trillion won worth of local stocks so far this year.

The Thai baht rose to 39.11 per dollar, helped by the bullish regional tone. The Indonesian rupiah edged higher from close to 8,600 per dollar. *Reuters*

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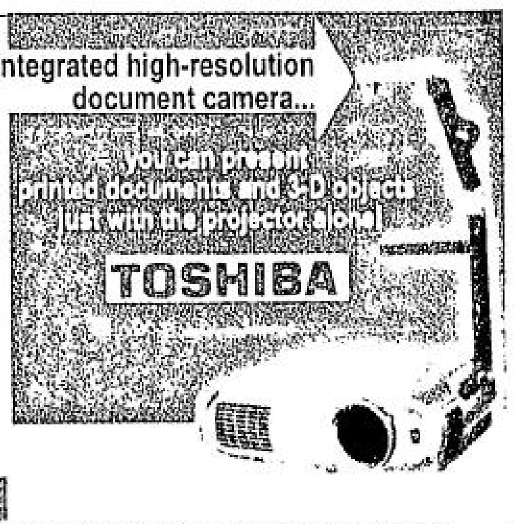

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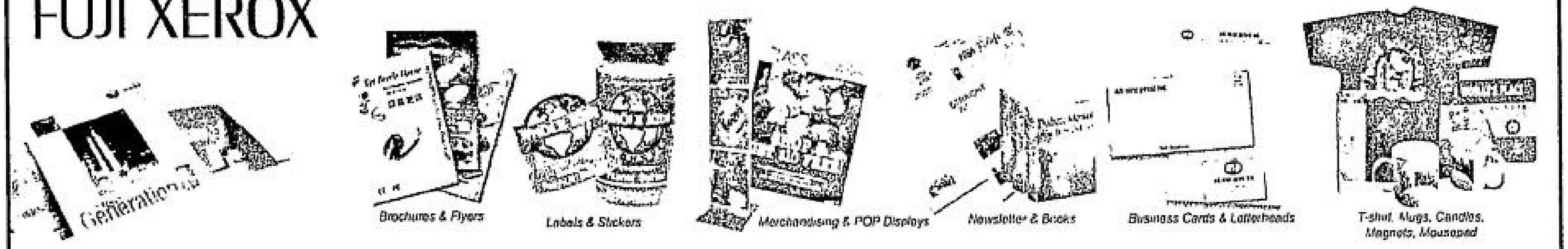
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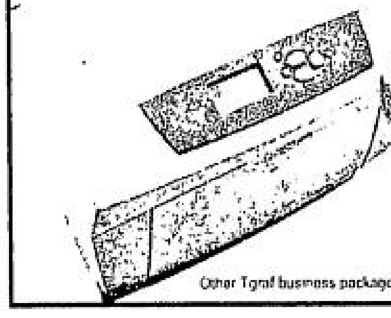

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Minimum Bid Price P600 000 00

UCPB 45 - RDSL LOT
L A 165sqm
#4022 Grapes St Pag asa Subd Gen T de Leon
Minimum Bid Price P412 500 00

ANTIPOLO, RIZAL

UCPB 46 - RSDL LOT
L A 350 sqm
L11 B5 Sadingham St
Barrington Place Bgy Mayamot
Minimum Bid Price P1 435 000 00

UCPB 47 - RSDL LOT
L A 1150 sqm
L10 B3 Town & Country Estate Bo Mayamot
Minimum Bid Price P4 374 00 00

UCPB 48 - RSDL LOT
L A 834 sqm
L5 B2 Seiford St Town & Country Estate
Bo Mayamot
Minimum Bid Price P3 170,000 00

UCPB 49 - RSDL LOT
L A 678 sqm
L20 B3 Parkridge Executive Vil Bo Mayamot
Minimum Bid Price P881 400 00

UCPB 50 - RSDL LOT
L A 640 sqm
L4 B4 Parkridge Executive Vil Bo Mayamot
Minimum Bid Price P1 028 500 00

UCPB 51 - RSDL LOT
L A 605 sqm
L3 B7 Parkridge Executive Vil Bo Mayamot
Minimum Bid Price P881 400 00

UCPB 52 - RSDL LOT
L A 368 sqm
L15 B29 Main Road/Rd Lot 44 Forest Hill Phse 1
Minimum Bid Price P1,098 000 00

UCPB 53 - RSDL LOT
L A 360sqm
L1 B8 Tres Hermanas Mayamot
Minimum Bid Price P972 000 00

UCPB 54 - RSDL LOT
L A 674 sqm
L55 & 54 B50 Camaro St
Vill Fast Executive Homes Cainta
Minimum Bid Price P2 735 000 00

UCPB 55 - RSDL LOT
L A 134 sqm
L8 B3 Condor St, Vista Verde Country Homes
Minimum Bid Price P310 000 00

UCPB 56 - COMML LOT
L A 400 sqm
ML Quezon Ext Brgy Dalig
Minimum Bid Price P2 200 000 00

UCPB 57 - RSDL LOT
L A 261sqm
L5 B3 Foliage Hills
Minimum Bid Price P1,148 400 00

UCPB 58 - RSDL LOT
L A 210 sqm
L6 B3 Foliage Hills
Minimum Bid Price P864,000 00

UCPB 59 - RSDL LOT
L A 168 sqm
L20 B1 Hills of Mara Alta
Minimum Bid Price P872 000 00

UCPB 60 - RSDL LOT
L A 153 sqm
L22 B3 Hills of Mara Alta
Minimum Bid Price P627,300 00

UCPB 61 - RSDL LOT
L A 385 sqm
L3 B1 Cottonwood Heights Subd
Minimum Bid Price P1,540 000 00

UCPB 62 - RSDL LOT
L A 254 sqm
L11 B4 Cottonwood Heights Subd
Minimum Bid Price P1 010,000 00

BULACAN

UCPB 63 - RSDL LOT
L A 1 152 sqm
L4 B29 Along Sampaguita Area C Sapang Palay SJDM
Minimum Bid Price P630 000.00

UCPB 64 - RSDL LOT
L A 2 315 sqm
Malyagn St Area F Sapang Palay, SJDM
Minimum Bid Price P800 000 00

UCPB 65 - RSDL LOT
L A 324 sqm
L8&9 B7 378 Opel St
Vilaluz Vill, Bgy Meycauayan
Minimum Bid Price P3 200,000 00

UCPB 66 - RSDL LOT
L A 221 sqm
3rd St Bo Fatima Sapang Palay SJDM
Minimum Bid Price P400 000 00

UCPB 67 - RSDL LOT
L A 1 628 sqm
L33 B2 Area A, Sapang Palay SJDM
Minimum Bid Price P3 000 000 00

UCPB 68 - RSDL LOT
L A 297 sqm
L1 B58 Area C Sapang Palay, SJDM
Minimum Bid Price P600,000 00

UCPB 69 - RSDL LOT
L A 2 778 sqm
L304 & 365 Maharlika Highway Bgy Longos Pulilan
Minimum Bid Price P3 250 000 00

UCPB 70 - RSDL LOT
L A 180 sqm
L6 B1 Domsal Subd (Amelia Subd)
Bgy Bulihan Malolos
Minimum Bid Price P300,000 00

UCPB 71 - RSDL LOT
L A 347 sqm
L20 B27 Along Assumption Road Area C,
Sapang Palay SJDM
Minimum Bid Price P575 000 00

UCPB 72 - RSDL LOT
L A 50 sqm
L14 B13 Ayuki Subdivision
Bgy Binang 2nd Turo, Bocaue
Minimum Bid Price P143,000 00

UCPB 73 - RSDL LOT
L A 100 sqm
L2 B15 Ayuki Subdivision
Bgy Binang 2nd Turo, Bocaue
Minimum Bid Price P287 421 90

UCPB 74 - RSDL LOT
L A 126 sqm
L1 B1 Ayuki Subdivision
Bgy Binang 2nd Turo, Bocaue
Minimum Bid Price P419 635 97

CAVITE

UCPB 75 - RSDL LOT
L A 534 sqm
L172 B54 Manila Southwoods Carmona
Minimum Bid Price P2 670 000 00

UCPB 76 - RSDL LOT
L A 548 sqm
L17 B35 Manila Southwoods Carmona
Minimum Bid Price P2 740,000 00

UCPB 77 - RSDL LOT
L A 801 sqm
Phase 4 Bayrid Drive Ma Southwoods Carmona
Minimum Bid Price P3 604 500 00

UCPB 78 - RSDL LOT
L A 1 000sqm
L13 B12 Rodeo Country Estate Subdivision
Minimum Bid Price P800,000 00

UCPB 79 - FARM LOT
L A 925 sqm
L20 B6 Rodeo Country Estate Subdivision
Minimum Bid Price P740 000 00

UCPB 80 - FARM LOT
L A 1 000 sqm
L16 B9 Rodeo Country Estate Subdivision
Minimum Bid Price P700 000 00

UCPB 81 - CONDO UNIT
F A 71 sqm
Unit 61B Vista De Loro Height Puerto Azul
Minimum Bid Price P2,700,000 00

UCPB 82 - RSDL LOT
L A 529 sqm
L 6 4&2 B6 No 44 Sampaguita St
Martin De Porres Subdivision
Minimum Bid Price P3 500,000 00

UCPB 83 - RSDL LOT
L A 615 sqm
L37 B1 Manila Southwood St Cabilang Baybay
Minimum Bid Price P2 150,000 00

ILOILO

UCPB 84 - RSDL LOT
LA 704 sqm
B 120 Along Puentes & Do Guello Streets,
Bgy San Agustin City Proper
Minimum Bid Price P7 040,000 00

UCPB 85 - RSDL LOT
LA 1 040 sqm
2126 B -14 Bgy Abeto Mirasol Mandurriao
Minimum Bid Price P1 820 000 00

UCPB 86 - RSDL LOT
LA 063 sqm
B4 L7,9 10 Along Dona Luz Ave &
Cadena De Amor St Don Francisco
Minimum Bid Price P2 260,000 00

BIÑAN, LAGUNA

UCPB 87 - HOUSE & LOT
LA 126 sqm
L1 B2 San Jose Vill Phase 4-C
Minimum Bid Price P620,000 00

UCPB 88 - HOUSE & LOT
LA 126 sqm
L2 B7 San Jose Vill Phase 4-C
Minimum Bid Price P820 000 00

UCPB 89 - HOUSE & LOT
LA 136 sqm
L18 B7 San Jose Vill Phase 4 -C
Minimum Bid Price P840,000 00

CALAMBA, LAGUNA

UCPB 90 - RSDL LOT
L A 270 sqm
Palacio Real Subdivision
Minimum Bid Price P753 300 00

UCPB 91 - RSDL LOT
L A 528 sqm
Palacio Real Subdivision
Minimum Bid Price P1,425,600 0

UCPB 92 - RESORT BLDG
L A 300 sqm
L5 H-9 Mana Makiling Village Bo Pansol
Minimum Bid Price P4,000 000 00

PILA, LAGUNA

UCPB 93 - RSDL LOT
L A 231 sqm
L1 & L2 B 3 Adelina Compound Sta Clara Norte
Minimum Bid Price P250 000 00

UCPB 94 - COMML LOT & BLDG
L A 986 sqm
L1 Blk 24 Along Diversion Road corner
Unnamed Subd Road Grand Riviera
Minimum Bid Price P3,500 000 00

UCPB 95 - RSDL LOT
L A 300 sqm
L 2639 C-2 Don Regino Sts Greenland Subd
Bgy Sta Clara
Minimum Bid Price P1.000 000 0

UCPB 96 - RSDL LOT
L A 458 sqm
Within Ocampo Compound Sta Clara Sur
Minimum Bid Price P500 000 00

UCPB 97 - RSDL LOT
L A 720 sqm
L 4-D Along Diversion Road Bulihan Norte
Minimum Bid Price P1 600 000 00

SAN PABLO, LAGUNA

UCPB 98 - RSDL LOT
L A 263 sqm
Along Road Lot 7 & 9 Richwood Park Vi
Minimum Bid Price P473 400 00

UCPB 99 - RSDL LOT
L A 271 sqm
Along Road Lot 7 & 9 Richwood Park Vill
Minimum Bid Price P487,800 00

UCPB 100 - RSDL LOT
L A 323 sqm
Along S Brucal Avenue Green Valley Subd.
San Francisco
Minimum Bid Price P480 000 00

UCPB 101 - RSDL LOT
L A 258 sqm
Along S Brucal Avenue Green Valley Subd
San Francisco
Minimum Bid Price P361,200 00

UCPB 102 - RSDL LOT
L A 256 sqm
Along S Brucal Avenue Green Valley Subd
San Francisco
Minimum Bid Price P358 400 00

STA. ROSA, LAGUNA

UCPB 103 - HOUSE & LOT
L A 178 sqm FA 44
L13 B 19 Sta Rosa Vill Phase 4-A Don Jose
Minimum Bid Price P935 000 00

UCPB 104 - HOUSE & LOT
L A 138 sqm FA 70
L 3 B 6 Sta Rosa Vill Phase 4-A Don Jose
Minimum Bid Price P968 000 00

LAGUNA

UCPB 105 - RESORT LOT
L A 175 sqm
L39 B8 Within Asia Ville Subd
Bo Masaya, Bay
Minimum Bid Price P350 000 0

UCPB 106 - RESORT LOT
L A 183 sqm
L 1 B9 Within Asia Ville Subd.
Bo Masaya, Bay
Minimum Bid Price P350,000 0

MONTALBAN, RIZAL

UCPB 107 - HOUSE & LOT
L A 454 sqm
L 34 & 36 B 13 Metro Mortland Ville
Minimum Bid Price P1 520 000 00

UCPB 108 - COMML LOT
L A 10 169 sqm
Conrock Crushing Plant Bo
Gunayang San Mateo
Minimum Bid Price P3,750,000 00

UCPB 109 - RSDL LOT
L A 1 500 sqm
Along Bgy Road Bgy May-iba Teresa
Minimum Bid Price P1 730 000 00

LUCENA CITY

UCPB 110 - RSDL LOT
L A 180 sqm
L22 B11 #19 Along Bolina St
Bulter Living Subd Isabang
Minimum Bid Price P1,184,000 00

UCPB 111 - COMML LOT
L A 1 410 sqm
Purok Malalimin Bgy Cotta
Minimum Bid Price P4,910 000 00

UCPB 112 - RSDL LOT
L A 194 sqm
L 4734-C-A-2 Along Trinidan St
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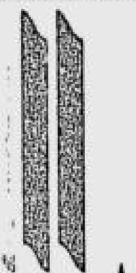

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PERSONAL

PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT Holy Spirit thou who make me see everything and show me the way to reach my ideal. You who give me the divine gift to forgive and forget the wrong that is done to me and who are in all instances of my life with me. I, in this short dialogue, want to thank You for everything and confirm once more that I never want to be separated from You, no matter how great the material desires may be. I want to be with You and my loved ones in Your Perpetual Glory Amen R.V.C.

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Minimum Qualifications

- A Filipino Citizen
- Preferably a holder of an earned doctoral degree
- Preferably not more than 60 years old at the time of the application
- Has at least five (5) years of relevant managerial & administrative experience
- Morally upright

In addition, nominees/interested applicants are required to make a full disclosure of all (filed, pending or resolved) administrative, criminal and civil cases, if any, through the following clearances / certifications:

- Sandigan Bayan
- Civil Service Commission
- Other Courts

Application/Nomination should be accompanied by:

- Detailed Curriculum Vitaé and documentary evidences supportive of qualification
- Statement of vision, mission and thrusts of the Camarines Norte State College
- Neuro-Psychiatric Exam
- Medical Certificate
- Drug test by an accredited health institution/center by Department of Health

Interested applicants/nominees are requested to submit six (6) copies of formal application, and all requirements on or before May 15, 2004 to:

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Commissioner, CHED and
Chairman-Designate, CNSC Board of Trustees
c/o Jennilyn M. Salubayba
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- Part-time/full time/hourly rates
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- At least with three (3) years rendering work experience
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- Articulate in English, and/or Arabic, Persian, Vietnamese, and Chinese will be an advantage but not required
- Hardworking, willing to be assigned abroad / can work long hours and on weekends
- Part-time / full time / hourly rates
- Valid passports and NBI clearance required

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- With at least with three (3) years work experience / skilled in making and rendering Interior perspectives
- Knowledgeable in CADD 2000 (COREL version 7 or 9 an advantage)
- Male / Female, Interior Design graduate
- Articulate in English, and/or Arabic, Persian, Vietnamese, and Chinese will be an advantage but not required
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- Part-time / full time / hourly rates
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PPhA sets 54th confab in Iloilo

THE PHILIPPINE Pharmaceutical Association will hold its 54th Annual Convention from April 15-17 at the Central Philippine University's Rose Memorial Hall in Iloilo City.

Aside from the three-day exhibit, the convention's highlights are the awarding of the prestigious "Bowl of Hygeia Award" to Outstanding Pharmacists for 2002 and 2003. United Laboratories will bestow the awards for Outstanding Chapter Achievement, Chapter Achievement for Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, and the Outstanding Pharmacist in the different affiliate organizations.

All pharmacists are enjoined to attend the convention and to participate actively in the ratification of the proposed New Philippine Pharmaceutical Association Constitution and By-Laws, final drafting of the proposed New Pharmacy Law for 2004 and in the election of the new set of Board of Directors for 2004-2006. Interested parties can contact the PPhA Secretariat, Tel. 313-0850 to 51.

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NOTICE OF DISSOLUTION

Notice is hereby given that the Amended Articles of Incorporation of CORPORATE INFORMATION SOLUTIONS INTERNATIONAL, INC. (the "Corporation") which shortened the term of its corporate existence to end on April 30, 2004 and hereby dissolving the said corporation on said date, has been approved by its Board of Directors and shareholders at duly constituted meetings both held on March 2, 2004.

All persons having claims against said corporation are requested to present same at the Corporation's principal place of business located at the Computer Services Building, Meralco Center, Ortigas Avenue, Pasig City

This announcement will serve as notice to all concerned of the legal dissolution of the aforesaid corporation

(Sgd.) RAUL G. CORALDE
Corporate Secretary

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"Whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life"

Josefa L. Maglaque

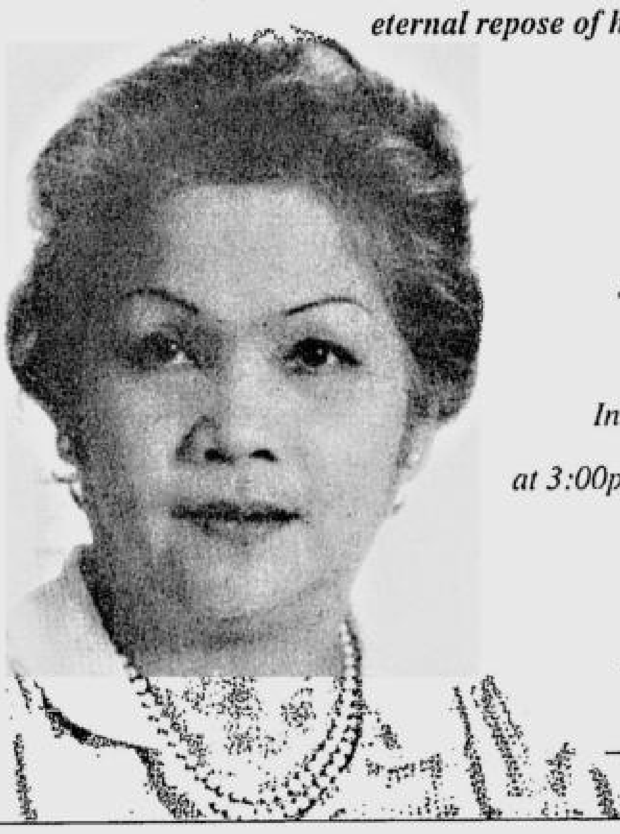
passed away peacefully in the grace of our Lord on the 12th of April 2004 at the age of 78.

Dear daughter of Jose (+) and Felisa (+) Maglaque

Caring sister to Sotero (+) Isabel (+) Remedios Cayari (+), Lourdes Valdez & Armando (+)

Loving aunt to Manuel, Ofelia, Flor, Tony, Luisa, Cora, Marissa, Renato, Cynthia, Eduardo, Danilo, Roberto.

We, her family, relatives and friends request those whose lives have been touched by our dearest "Miss Jo" and all pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.



Her remains lie in state at the St. Alphonsus de Liguori Church, Magallanes Village, Makati.

Interment will be on April 15, 2004 at 3:00pm at the Manila South Cemetery following the 2:00pm mass.

All donations to Caritas Manila

ARTURO ENRIQUEZ, SR.

Has peacefully rest in the infinite warmth and embrace of our Lord on April 11, 2004 at the age of 57.

His loving wife **JUDITH**; children **IMELDA BELEN, ARTURO JR., MARICEL, ROSALYN, JOJO TINA, AJ**; and sisters **MERCEDES, FRANCESCA, CRISCENCIA** and **LYDIA**; brother **ALFREDO**, in-laws, grandchildren, nephews, nieces, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Arlington Memorial Chapels, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Sunday, April 18, 2004 at Eternal Gardens after the 8:00 a.m. Mass.

(CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS)

BISHOP ERNESTO R. PANTIG

Peacefully joined our Creator on April 10, 2004 at the age of 69.

His beloved wife **MILAGROS C. PANTIG**; children **MARY GRACE, ROMMEL** and **LIEZL**; grandchildren **CYRONE JOERGE, SAMANTHA GRACE**, church elders and church members relatives and friends request the pious reader to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Chapel 10, Funeraria Paz, C.M. Recto Ave., cor. T. Mapua, Manila.

Interment will be on Saturday, April 17, 2004 at the Manila North Cemetery after the 1 p.m. memorial service.

"...absent with the body to be present with the Lord."

— 2 Corinthians 5:8

Please say a prayer for

EMILIO YOUNG

Who, last Holy Good Friday, 9th April 2004
Peacefully joined to rest with His LORD and left us:

His wife, **ALBERTA "Nene" LEDESMA**; his children, **Loretta "Bingbing" & Rem Ong, (+) Audie "Nonoy" & Shirley Young, Liane "Neneng" & Roger Siao, Lilibeth "Chichi" & Hossein Moghareh, Mary Lucyl "Bebe" & Boy Jamilarin, Maria Liza "Tata" & Sonni Ginting, Maria Lourdes "Dodie" & Benjie Urrutia** and **Liezl "Pinky" Young**; grandchildren, **Menard Ong, Lady Beth Ong, Lory Mae & Neik Ko, Lauren Joy Ong, Cherie Lynn Ong, Sheryl Young, Ryan Siao, Ken Siao, Arvin Siao, Amir Moghareh, Ramin Moghareh, Ian James Jamilarin, Van Aldrin Jamilarin, Selina Leda Ginting, Sean Alberto Ginting, Sabrina Melanie Ginting, Matthew Audie Urrutia** and **Jarod Emilio Urrutia**; great grandchild, **Matthew Ko**.

His body lies in state at St. Anne Molo Church, Molo, Iloilo City.

Interment will be on Saturday, 17th April 2004 at 8:30 in the morning at Christ the King Memorial Park, Iloilo City.

FEDERICO L. MELOCOTON, JR.

DIRECTOR, BUREAU OF AGRARIAN LEGAL ASSISTANCE - DAR
FORMER ASST. CITY PROSECUTOR, MAKATI PROSECUTORS OFFICE
FORMER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PHIL. RACING COMMISSION

Died on April 12, 2004
at the age of 55.

His loving wife **JEAN**; son **FREDERICK JOHN**, his special child **FEDERICO III**, mother **ENRIQUETA**, BROTHERS and SISTERS, request your prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at Loyola Memorial Chapel, Guadalupe, Makati City. Cremation will be on April 15, 2004 at Loyola Crematorium, Guadalupe, Makati City. Interment will be on April 17, 2004 at Panabo City, Davao del Norte.

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May hinahanap ka bang dream job?

Sumali na sa

MyTRABAHO

A Public Service Program to Help Jobseekers and People at Work Find Their Dream Jobs

Tune in to **My Trabaho** at **DZRH** today at 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. at 666 on your AM radio dial for more information on this program. Or check out **My Trabaho** at **Job Market** this coming Sunday in Sunday People at Work / Job Market

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

JOB Market
Where You Find The Best.

OPTIMUS INNOVATIONS, INC.

DZRH

A project of the
Philippine Daily Inquirer,
Optimus Innovations
and Manila Broadcasting Company.

A. Who are qualified to join:

1. Filipino citizen
2. Graduate of a two-year course, a 4-year college course or higher degrees
3. Physically and mentally fit
4. No police or criminal record
5. Residing in Metro Manila or if provincial resident, can reside in Metro Manila at own expense for the duration of the availment of the benefits
6. Willing to accept terms and conditions of acceptance of benefits

B. Mechanics

1. Send through postal mail or e-mail a letter describing yourself, your strengths and weaknesses, and why you deserve to be selected as a beneficiary of this program, together with a bio-data and one 1X1 photo to

   "My Trabaho at Job Market"
   Philippine Daily Inquirer Bldg.
   Chino Roces Ave. corner Yague St.
   Makati City
   E-mail address. peopleatwork@inquirer.com.ph

2. On April 21, thirty(30) letters will be picked (by drawing at random the letters from a box).
3. These 30 letter senders will be invited to attend a 2-day Career Planning Workshop for free to be conducted by Career Systems Inc.
4. From these 30 letter senders ten (10) will be selected by career mentors to be given the following assistance:
   - i. Weekly career coaching sessions good for two months by a trained and qualified career mentor
   - ii. Two (2) outfits suitable to the targeted job of the applicant
   - iii. A makeover by a reputable grooming salon to prepare her / him for his / her first job interview
   - iv. Free attendance in a two-day Resume Preparation/ Interview Seminar
   - v. Cash of P5,000 to be used in going to interviews, making letters of application and resumes, photos and other expenses that will be incurred in their job hunt for two months
5. Announcement of the partial and full beneficiaries shall be done in "My Trabaho at DZRH" which is aired every Wednesday from 3 to 4 p.m. on 666 on your AM radio dial and published in the Philippine Daily Inquirer in "My Trabaho at Job Market."
6. Stories on the mentors, sponsors and winners shall be written and published in the "My Trabaho at Job Market" section in the Sunday People at Work / Job Market and featured in "My Trabaho at DZRH."
7. The organizers of this program does not guarantee the beneficiaries any job or employment. It will only provide the benefits listed above as assistance to increase the job seeker's chances in landing his/ her dream job

John Clements Consultants, Inc. CAREER SYSTEMS INC [illegible]

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Finance
BUREAU OF CUSTOMS
PORT OF MANILA
Customs District II-A
South Harbor, Manila

NOTICE OF SALE

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 2601, other related provisions of the Tariff and Customs Code of the Philippines and CMO 5-2003, there will be a **PUBLIC AUCTION SALE (Sealed Bidding)** to be conducted at the Office of Auction and Cargo Disposal Division Room No. 304,Customhouse Bldg., South Harbor, Port Area, Manila on **April 16, 2004** (Friday) of the hereunder listed Perishable goods. Said items/goods shall be available for public viewing on **April 15, 2004** (Thursday).

In the event of failed bidding, the same shall be offered in the a second auction to be hled on the third business day following the first failed bidding at the same time and place with no reduction of the floor price and without need for further advertisement, except as to perishable items, which may be auctioned again on the following business day. When at least two of the sealed bids submitted in an auction fall within ten (10%) percent of the highest bid, the same should be above the floor price (clustering). Those in the cluster shall immediately go into an open bidding with the highest sealed bid serving as the new floor price of the lot being sold.

The winning bidders shall be required to pay 50% of the bid price either in cash and/or manager's check at the end of the bidding. For meritorious reason, said bidder may be allowed to make such payment not later than two (2) hours from the awarding of the won bid. The remaining balance of 50% of the bid price shall be paid within the next business day.

IMPORTANT:

Only registered bidders who have paid the Registration Fee of Two Thousand (P2,000.00) pesos and Cash Bond (Refundable) of Twenty Thousand Pesos (P20,000.00) are eligible to participate in the auction sale.

Registration starts at 1:30 p.m. and will close at 2:00 p.m.

For further inquiry, please contact the following telephone number 528-60-00 local 459.

LOT #	ITEM/DESCRIPTION	FLOOR PRICE
005-04	1,106 bags Premium Rice Well Milled	Php 526,939.00
058-03	1,500 bags Long Grain White Rice (50kg/bag)	Php 714,656.25

(Sgd.) **ATTY. RONNIE C. SILVESTRE**
District Collector
Port of Manila

(PDI - April 14 2004)

BILLBOARD FOR RENT

Prime Billboard site along Edsa
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High exposure for vehicles going to Makati,
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60 x 40 vertical billboard

For inquiries,
please call Anthony at 750-7496

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giathai@ksc15.th.com
www.giathailand.com

Philippine-Australia Land Administration and Management Project **(PA LAMP)** Technical Assistance is funded by the Government of Australia. The technical assistance team is managed by Land Equity International and is in need of a:

National Adviser for One-Stop-Shop (OSS) Management

(4 person months project employment stationed at Tacloban City)

Qualifications:

- Extensive management consulting experience
- Strong ability to work with different stakeholders is important
- Sound interpersonal skills and excellent writing skills is essential

The Terms of Reference is available on request (Tel No. 920-6215) or via e-mail.

Applicants must submit their comprehensive bio-data, with referees and recent photo to:

PA LAMP
Attention: Tina Bayani
c/o 2nd floor DENR Main Building
DENR Compound, Visayas Ave., Quezon City
Or e-mail at: palamp3@mindgate.net

Deadline of submission: 22 April 2004

From the nation's No. 1 Newspaper: INQUIRER

Read it every Sunday with the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

JOB Market

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Quezon City

ANNOUNCEMENT OF BIDDING

The National Food Authority (NFA) wishes to announce that it will be conducting a bidding on **May 04, 2004 at 10:00 a.m.** at the FOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTER BUILDING FTI Complex, Taguig, Metro Manila, among all interested rice suppliers for the supply of maximum 190,000 MT, 5% MOLSO, long grain white rice, 5%, 15% and 25% brokens of Thailand, Vietnam, U.S. and/or China origin in 50 kilograms net capacity polypropylene bags with an appropriated budget of Php 3.3B from corporate resources.

All interested suppliers are required to submit quotations for all specifications, all modes of payment and on the basis of a mandatory countertrade commitment and countertrade performed on best effort. Otherwise, bids will be considered non-responsive. Price shall be quoted in US$ per MT, CFR, FO, one (1) safe port, one/two safe berths under the following payment terms:

a. Documents Against Payment (D/P)
b. Documents Against Acceptance (D/A) with a tenor of one hundred eighty (180) days from B/L date.

Arrival Period	Volume to be Offered (MT) Percentage of max. vol. to be awarded
May/June 2004	at least 50%
July 2004	balance

Government suppliers who have delivered to the NFA within the last two (2) years (2002-2003) and who do not have a bad track record may be awarded a maximum of 150,000 MT, 5% MOLSO. Other government suppliers and private suppliers without bad track record may be awarded a maximum of 15,000 MT, 5% MOLSO. Suppliers and/or source companies with pending import related accounts/liability except despatch/demurrage are considered to have bad track record. Vessels to be utilized should have a maximum load capacity of 15,000 MT.

Minimum volume to be offered per supplier shall be 10,000 MT per specification.

All bidders are required to post a bid bond equivalent to 10% of the highest value offered quantity in the form of cashier's/manager's check issued by a reputable bank in Metro Manila or an Irrevocable standby Letter of Credit issued by a reputable commercial bank or in the case of an irrevocable stand-by L/C issued by a foreign bank, the same shall be confirmed by a reputable local bank.

Winning bidders are required to submit a performance bond equivalent to 10% of the value of the awarded quantity within three (3) banking days after receipt of the notice of award in the form of cashier's/ manager's check issued by a reputable bank in Metro Manila or an irrevocable standby Letter of Credit issued by a reputable commercial bank or in the case of an irrevocable stand-by L/C issued by a foreign bank, the same shall be confirmed by a reputable local bank. Bid bond can be converted to performance bond.

List of Eligibility Requirements may be secured from the BAC Secretariat, 5th floor, NFA, Matimyas Bldg., 101 E. Rodriguez Sr. Ave., Quezon City starting **12 April 2004.**

The pre-bidding conference will be held on **19 April 2004** at 10:00 a.m. at the FOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTER BUILDING FTI Complex, Taguig, Metro Manila.

Submission of eligibility envelope, technical proposal together with the bid bond and price offers will be between 8:00 a.m. to 9:55 a.m. on the tender date. Opening of bids will start exactly at 10:00 a.m.

The terms of reference and bid documents will be available starting **April 12-16, 2004** (8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.) upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P5,000.00.

The National Food Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bid proposals, to waive any required formality or defect therein and may accept the bid/s which is deemed most advantageous to the Agency.

(Sgd.) **GREGORIO Y. TAN, JR.**
Deputy Administrator and
Chairman, BAC

(PDI - April 7 & 14, 2004)

How do you evaluate employees objectively?

WORKING WOUNDED

Bob Rosner

DEAR WW: I'm about to evaluate the performance of my direct reports. This is my first time and I want to be a lot more objective than most of my bosses have been to me.

Judge and Jury

Brian Hill is the former coach of the National Basketball Association's Vancouver Grizzlies. The team's name was particularly appropriate for their uninspiring performance during his tenure: eight wins and 42 losses.

Yet after being fired Hill said, "I deserve an explanation for my dismissal." Eight and 42 shouldn't require an explanation. But if you ever have to fire an employee it probably will require an explanation, along with a hefty paper trail. So you're wise to be taking evaluations seriously.

I've outlined common errors and how to overcome them. For more, check out Dick Grote's "The Complete Guide to Performance Appraisal" (Amacom, 1996).

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Do you let your first impression distort later information? "What have you done for me lately" sounds crass—but it's a much better measure of performance than your gut feeling about an employee. Don't let your feelings—often formed early in your relationship—blind you to an employee's actual performance.

Do you draw conclusions about people based on one aspect of their performance? Nobody is all good or all bad; we all have areas in which we're stronger and weaker. Give your employees maximum chance to learn—and shine—by critiquing each area of their performance.

Do you rate people like you higher than people who aren't like you? Cloning might work for sheep, but it's dangerous at work. Resist the temptation to reward only people who look and act like you. Do you rate everyone in the middle of the pack? This robs them of the chance to improve or to be recognized for good work. Do you rate everyone lower or higher than they deserve? Some managers skew high for fear of being critical. Others skew low because they believe poor ratings encourage improvement. Both strategies are unfair and unproductive. Do you attribute failings to the person and success to external factors? Hmm ... might want to rethink that if you do. Give credit and blame where they are properly due.

Do you give more weight to recent events while overlooking the past?

Evaluate each person for the entire time period being considered; don't overlook data from early on.

Do you generalize across groups and ignore individual differences? I've yet to meet a person who didn't have some bias. Know yours and work hard to keep it out of evaluations. One strategy: get someone to look over your shoulder to ensure you're being fair.

Follow these tips and your evaluations should be more objective—and less grizzly—than those you've received in the past.

Here are the results of our last workingwounded.com/ABC-news.com online ballot: How would you rate the employee evaluations where you work?

—Great, 14.6%

—What evaluations, 34.8%

—Biased, 50.5%

(Mr. Rosner is based in Seattle, Washington, USA. E-mail him at bob@workingwounded.com.)

ILLUSTRATION BY STEPH BRAVO

Profile of a successful job search campaign

Pick me, Me! ME!

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bTHE GRADUATES of 2004 are all at the starting line. After the Holy Week, the race is on to land a job. Who among this year's graduates will get to the finish line and land a job in two to three months' time?

To help job seekers get ahead of the pack, Drake Beam Morin (DBM), one of the world's leading provider of strategic human resource solutions, shares some indicators that a job search is going well.

The job search process can be complex and challenging—there are many details to address, plans to formulate and contacts to make. As unemployment rates continue to rise—the latest figures released by the National Statistics Office show an increase from 10.6 last year to 11 percent in January—more people will have more difficulty finding jobs, whether they are fresh graduates or in transition, a term that refers to workers in between jobs.

Before job seekers even consider throwing in the towel or changing job search strategies, they should carefully assess if they are on the right track to finding a new job.

"Foremost to a successful job search campaign is a plan," said Mario R. Gatus, President of DBM Phils. "Job seekers should develop a job search campaign strategy, which will enable them to: stay focused; cover more territory faster and decrease job search time; demonstrate their focus and drive to potential employers; feel less removed from regular work habits; maintain self-confidence and self-esteem; and have the satisfaction of 'doing' and 'creating,' not just waiting for something to happen," he said.

Mr. Gatus also advises job seekers to make a "Weekly Action Plan" to monitor their activities and make sure these are consistent with the overall job search strategy.

Other indicators that a job search would lead to success:

1. You find yourself frequently out of your house in networking meetings, informational meetings and/or interviews. You are out there in the world, making contacts—instead of being home in bed or watching TV, hoping that your next job opportunity will come find you. Finding a new job is a full-time job, and you should treat it that way by "working" (or searching) normal business hours during the week.

2. People you meet during networking voluntarily give you contact names and offer to help you. You have done your homework and prepared yourself to tell your story and market yourself to networking contacts and potential employers. The best way to find a new job is through your network; and a constantly expanding network will only help your cause and improve your chances of securing new employment.

3. You are engaged in many activities—people to see, follow-up procedures, research, writing thank you notes to your networking contacts—and finding that there are not enough hours in the day. Again, searching is your job right now and you're busy. Try to maintain a system to track information regarding research, follow-up activities and interactions with people you meet.

4. You experience feelings of confidence and satisfaction. It's human nature to feel good about yourself when you've done something well. You'll know when your job search is going well because you'll build confidence as you make more networking calls and contacts, and you'll feel good when you start scheduling interviews and meetings as the result of your hard work.

5. You are juggling multiple position offers. If you receive more than one offer, be sure to evaluate all offers very carefully and select the one that best matches the ideal work preferences you identified at the beginning of your search.

6. You find the work of your choice. The ultimate reward for all of your efforts: you started the process by doing self-assessments and determining what your ideal job situation would be and now you have gotten a job offer that matches those expectations.

"To produce the best results in the fastest time frame possible, job seekers should apply the same energy, vigor, methods and procedures to searching for work as they would to any other task throughout their careers," M. Gatus said. He further added, "When one does not achieve the results he expects, he should backtrack, review and modify his plan, if necessary, and implement it with renewed persistence."

Employees, both those who are currently employed or in active search of new jobs, are also encouraged to pursue lifetime learning strategies and programs to keep themselves abreast with current developments and to continue being relevant and responsive to the organizations they work for.

Known for over 35 years for its innovative and effective career transition services, DBM offers in-depth capabilities in employee transition, retention, development, and selection. Founded in 1967, the company has more than 230 locations in 51 countries including the Philippines.

(E-mail feedback to info@dbm.com.ph.)

Cheap thrills from big questions

By Gina Abuyuan-Llanes

WORKING MOM

Gina Abuyuan-Llanes

MY daughter would make a great interviewer. She'd knock Dianne Sawyer and Larry King off their thrones. Get a load of some of her recent questions-all, obvibusly, directed to all-knowing Mommy:

"Mommy, what came first, the alphabet, or God?"

"Mommy, what's stress?"

"Mommy, *'yung mga nago-office*, like you, *may* summer vacations? Or *mga* kids *lang*, like me?"

And, during dinner and while "Minority Report" was on HBO (with one of the first scenes playing, where a man catches his wife and her lover about to do the dirty deed): "Mommy, what's that, sex?" Her tone was almost urbane.

With all the seriousness my husband and I could muster, we nodded. "Yes, *anak.*"

You'd think I, working in a parenting magazine, would know how to answer, right? Wrong.

Let's tackle them one by one.

Question no. 1: "Mommy, what came first, the alphabet, or God?"

Mommy's answer: (silence, thinking that if I answered God, I would be contradicting my earlier attempts to explain how God has no beginning nor ending—a concept, actually, which I think I needed to elucidate more on, but would have to wait. But clearly God created all things, so He must've came first before the alphabet, and besides the first real alphabet didn't start till the Sumerians or whatever, so ...) "God."

Simone: "But Mommy, *'di ba* God is Jesus, and Jesus is a word? And 'God', *di ba* word din *yon*? And *di ba* a word is (made of letters from) the alphabet? So *sabay lang sila?*"

Mommy: (silence, thinking 'OH MY GOD,' technically and theologically, she's right—in the beginning was the Word, the Logos!) *"Oo nga ano anak. Tama ka dyan."*

Question no. 2: "Mommy, what's stress?"

Mommy's answer: (While draping myself lazily and inelegantly on the couch) "Stress is when you have lots of work and you're tired but still you have to work and when you come home you get mad because you're tired but you don't really mean to but it's just because you have too much work and you're very tired and all you want to do is sleep."

Simone: "Oh ... Mommy? You're always stress (sic)."

Question no. 3: "Mommy, *'yung mga nago-office*, like you, may summer vacations? Or *mga* kids *lang*, like me?"

Mommy's answer: (getting ready for work and prepping myself up into a Working Mom, work-life advocate mode) *"Wala, anak*, but we have a thing called leave, where we can be absent. We just have to ask permission from our boss. Like when you ask permission from me to go play outside. Why, do you want to go to the beach? I can ask for a leave."

Simone: (totally ignoring what I just said) "No, but Mommy, I mean *'yung maaataaagaaaal* na summer vacation, *wala kayo?*"

Mommy: (still in my chipper Working Mom mode) "Ah, none, anak."

Simone: (grinning sheepishly) *"Ayoko na mag-office."*

What's the point of all this? More than her being inquisitive and smart, I'm thankful my daughter comes to me with all these questions. To her, I'm still someone who has all the answers—no matter how inane and lame they seem. To her, I'm a walking encyclopedia, dictionary, Merck's manual and Roget's Thesaurus, rolled into one. To her, I'm still someone she can approach, even if yes, I admit, I am too stressed and turn snappish more times than I care to count. Despite this, she keeps on bugging me, indefatigably and faithfully—for want of attention or for a real quest for the answers, I don't care—as long as it is to me she turns. It's one of the cheap, precious thrills a busy working mom can look forward to at the end of another frazzled day. And because I cherish these times too much, I never answer just: "Because." That would be too easy. My little Dianne Sawyer would never invite me on her show again.

(Gina Abuyuan-Llanes is Editor in Chief of Working Mom magazine. For more stories on loving your work, loving your kids, and making the most out of both, get the April issue of Working Mom, with Bea Lucero and Christine Jacob on the cover. Comments are welcome at gina_llanes-@abs.pinoycentral.com.)

Common blunders ...

From page B14

al career, assess yourself. The problem may not be in the career but in you.

3. Look for the "real you." Many career consultants believe in the conventional wisdom that in order for a person to find the right career, he must first find his "real self." This is a fallacy because in reality, each of us has many "possible selves."

If you look at yourself now, you will realize that you are not the "you" five years ago. Maybe, there is no real "self" because as we live and work, we are always changing and becoming somebody else. As a career consultant, I believe that a person has many possible selves. Therefore, career possibilities for those who want to shift careers could be endless.

4. Just focus on doing one thing at a time. Since you can have many "possible selves," you can do a variety of things. Doing so can give you the much-needed clues on what you do best and what you like doing most. Limiting yourself to just your job description is tantamount to self-mutilation of your career.

You can maintain focus on your current job and career and avail yourself of the many possibilities that await you in the future if you know how to manage your time. In fact, you can use your time off the job (weekends, maybe) to learn and try new skills, especially those not related to your present job or career. Doing some work for the barangay, an NGO, a cooperative and other organizations can open new career possibilities in the future.

5. Take the plunge right away. Changing careers needs perfect timing. Most people who succeeded in changing careers are those who have learned the skills needed to succeed in those new careers long before they dumped their old careers. If you don't have a viable alternative, don't make your boss fire you now. You might soon realize that a bad job or career is better than no job or career at all.

Look at your "possible selves" and see what it takes to master the skills needed to realize one or two of those "possible selves." Continually learn and test yourself, without throwing away your old self. When you are confident that your "possible self" can be a reality, create triggers or catalysts, perhaps of catastrophic proportions, to jolt you into switching to a new career that you have always wanted.

People who dream of changing their careers must by necessity, create time and space for their dream. They must spend their time and energy more in learning new competencies to be a "new self" than in introspection or finding their "real self."

(Join the EC Career Club and learn more trailblazing, nonconventional career tips and advice. Cecilia is the president and CEO of EC Business Solutions and Career Center, a business and human resources consulting firm. He was president of the Personnel Management Association of the Philippines in 1999. E-mail him at erniec@edsamail.com.ph.)

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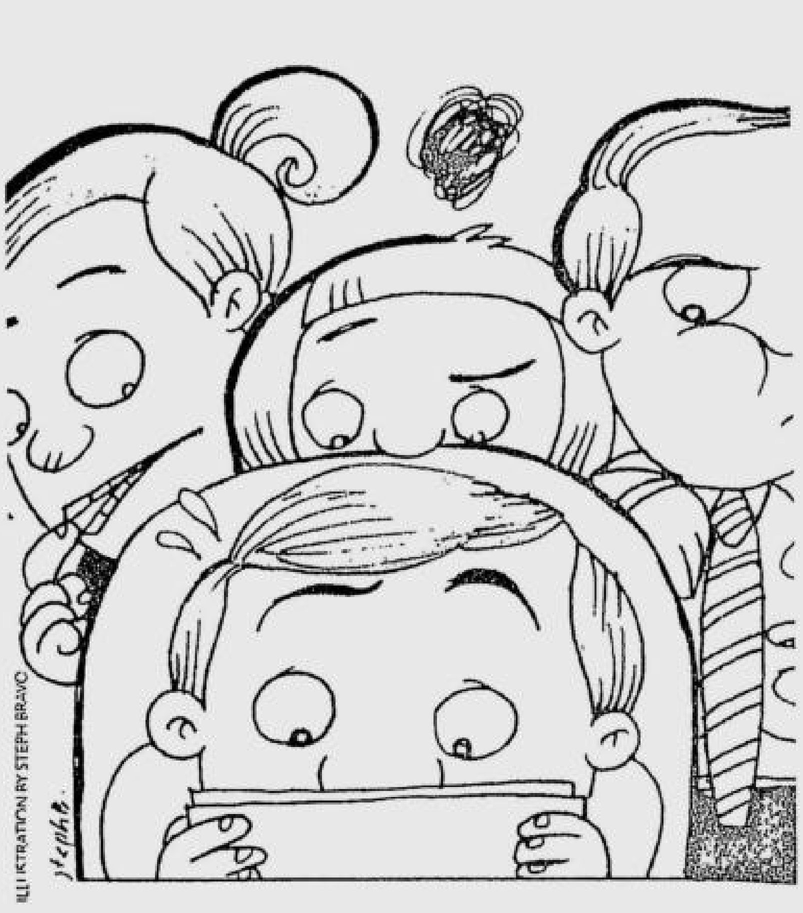

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5. You are juggling multiple position offers. If you receive more than one offer, be sure to evaluate all offers very carefully and select the one that best matches the ideal work preferences you identified at the beginning of your search.

6. You find the work of your choice. The ultimate reward for all of your efforts: you started the process by doing self-assessments and determining what your ideal job situation would be and now you have gotten a job offer that matches those expectations.

"To produce the best results in the fastest time frame possible, job seekers should apply the same energy, vigor, methods and procedures to searching for work as they would to any other task throughout their careers," M. Gatus said. He further added, "When one does not achieve the results he expects, he should backtrack, review and modify his plan, if necessary, and implement it with renewed persistence."

Employees, both those who are currently employed or in active search of new jobs, are also encouraged to pursue lifetime learning strategies and programs to keep themselves abreast with current developments and to continue being relevant and responsive to the organizations they work for.

Known for over 35 years for its innovative and effective career transition services, DBM offers in-depth capabilities in employee transition, retention, development, and selection. Founded in 1967, the company has more than 230 locations in 51 countries including the Philippines.

(*E-mail feedback to* info@dbm.com.ph.)

Cheap thrills from big questions

By Gina Abuyuan-Llanes

WORKING MOM

Gina Abuyuan-Llanes

MY daughter would make a great interviewer. She'd knock Dianne Sawyer and Larry King off their thrones. Get a load of some of her recent questions-all, obvibusly, directed to all-knowing Mommy:

"Mommy, what came first, the alphabet, or God?"

"Mommy, what's stress?"

"Mommy, *'yung mga nago-office*, like you, *may* summer vacations? Or *mga* kids *lang*, like me?"

And, during dinner and while "Minority Report" was on HBO (with one of the first scenes playing, where a man catches his wife and her lover about to do the dirty deed): "Mommy, what's that, sex?" Her tone was almost urbane.

With all the seriousness my husband and I could muster, we nodded. "Yes, *anak.*"

You'd think I, working in a parenting magazine, would know how to answer, right? Wrong.

Let's tackle them one by one.

Question no. 1: "Mommy, what came first, the alphabet, or God?"

Mommy's answer: (silence, thinking that if I answered God, I would be contradicting my earlier attempts to explain how God has no beginning nor ending—a concept, actually, which I think I needed to elucidate more on, but would have to wait. But clearly God created all things, so He must've came first before the alphabet, and besides the first real alphabet didn't start till the Sumerians or whatever, so ...) "God."

Simone: "But Mommy, *'di ba* God is Jesus, and Jesus is a word? And 'God', *di ba* word din *yon*? And *di ba* a word is (made of letters from) the alphabet? So *sabay lang sila*?"

Mommy: (silence, thinking 'OH MY GOD,' technically and theologically, she's right—in the beginning was the Word, the Logos!) "*Oo nga ano anak. Tama ka dyan.*"

Question no. 2: "Mommy, what's stress?"

Mommy's answer: (While draping myself lazily and inelegantly on the couch) "Stress is when you have lots of work and you're tired but still you have to work and when you come home you get mad because you're tired but you don't really mean to but it's just because you have too much work and you're very tired and all you want to do is sleep."

Simone: "Oh ... Mommy? You're always stress (sic)."

Question no. 3: "Mommy, *'yung mga nago-office*, like you, may summer vacations? Or *mga* kids *lang*, like me?"

Mommy's answer: (getting ready for work and prepping myself up into a Working Mom, work-life advocate mode) "*Wala, anak*, but we have a thing called leave, where we can be absent. We just have to ask permission from our boss. Like when you ask permission from me to go play outside. Why, do you want to go to the beach? I can ask for a leave."

Simone: (totally ignoring what I just said) "No, but Mommy, I mean *'yung maaataaagaaaal* na summer vacation, *wala kaya*?"

Mommy: (still in my chipper Working Mom mode) "Ah, none, anak."

Simone: (grinning sheepishly) "*Ayoko na mag-office.*"

What's the point of all this? More than her being inquisitive and smart, I'm thankful my daughter comes to me with all these questions. To her, I'm still someone who has all the answers—no matter how inane and lame they seem. To her, I'm a walking encyclopedia, dictionary, Merck's manual and Roget's Thesaurus, rolled into one. To her, I'm still someone she can approach, even if yes, I admit, I am too stressed and turn snappish more times than I care to count. Despite this, she keeps on bugging me, indefatigably and faithfully—for want of attention or for a real quest for the answers. I don't care—as long as it is to me she turns. It's one of the cheap, precious thrills a busy working mom can look forward to at the end of another frazzled day. And because I cherish these times too much, I never answer just: "Because." That would be too easy. My little Dianne Sawyer would never invite me on her show again.

(*Gina Abuyuan-Llanes is Editor in Chief of Working Mom magazine. For more stories on loving your work, loving your kids, and making the most out of both, get the April issue of Working Mom, with Bea Lucero and Christine Jacob on the cover. Comments are welcome at* gina_llanes@abs.pinoycentral.com.)

Common blunders ...

From page B14

al career, assess yourself. The problem may not be in the career but in you.

3. Look for the "real you." Many career consultants believe in the conventional wisdom that in order for a person to find the right career, he must first find his "real self." This is a fallacy because in reality, each of us has many "possible selves."

If you look at yourself now, you will realize that you are not the "you" five years ago. Maybe, there is no real "self" because as we live and work, we are always changing and becoming somebody else. As a career consultant, I believe that a person has many possible selves. Therefore, career possibilities for those who want to shift careers could be endless.

4. Just focus on doing one thing at a time. Since you can have many "possible selves," you can do a variety of things. Doing so can give you the much-needed clues on what you do best and what you like doing most. Limiting yourself to just your job description is tantamount to self-mutilation of your career.

You can maintain focus on your current job and career and avail yourself of the many possibilities that await you in the future if you know how to manage your time. In fact, you can use your time off the job (weekends, maybe) to learn and try new skills, especially those not related to your present job or career. Doing some work for the barangay, an NGO, a cooperative and other organizations can open new career possibilities in the future.

5. Take the plunge right away. Changing careers needs perfect timing. Most people who succeeded in changing careers are those who have learned the skills needed to succeed in those new careers long before they dumped their old careers. If you don't have a viable alternative, don't make your boss fire you now. You might soon realize that a bad job or career is better than no job or career at all.

Look at your "possible selves" and see what it takes to maste th [illegible] ls needed to realize one [illegible] two of those "po[illegible] ble [illegible] ontinually learn and [illegible] myself without throw [illegible] a [illegible] year old [illegible] f. When [illegible] are confident that your "pos[illegible] self" can be a reality, create triggers or catalysts perhaps [illegible] proporti [illegible] nto switchi [illegible] ew [illegible] at you have always wanted.

People who dream of c[illegible] ing their careers must by [illegible] sity, create time and space for their dream. They must s[illegible] nd their tim[illegible] and energ[illegible] in lear[illegible] ew compet[illegible] to be [illegible] self" than [illegible] intro-spect [illegible] finding [illegible] elf."

Join th [illegible]

PEOPLE*at*WORK

E-mail: peopleatwork@inquirer.com.ph

Editor **Raul O. Marcelo**
Subsection Editor **Regina Galang Reyes**

Common blunders in career change

ILLUSTRATION BY ANTHONY MISTADES

By Ernie O. Cecilia

ARE you tired of doing the same boring routine year in and year out? Are you looking at a dead-end in your career? Has office politics become too numbing and obnoxious for you to take? Are you practically dragging yourself to work? Have you realized that you don't have time for life outside of your work? Are you really happy doing what you do?

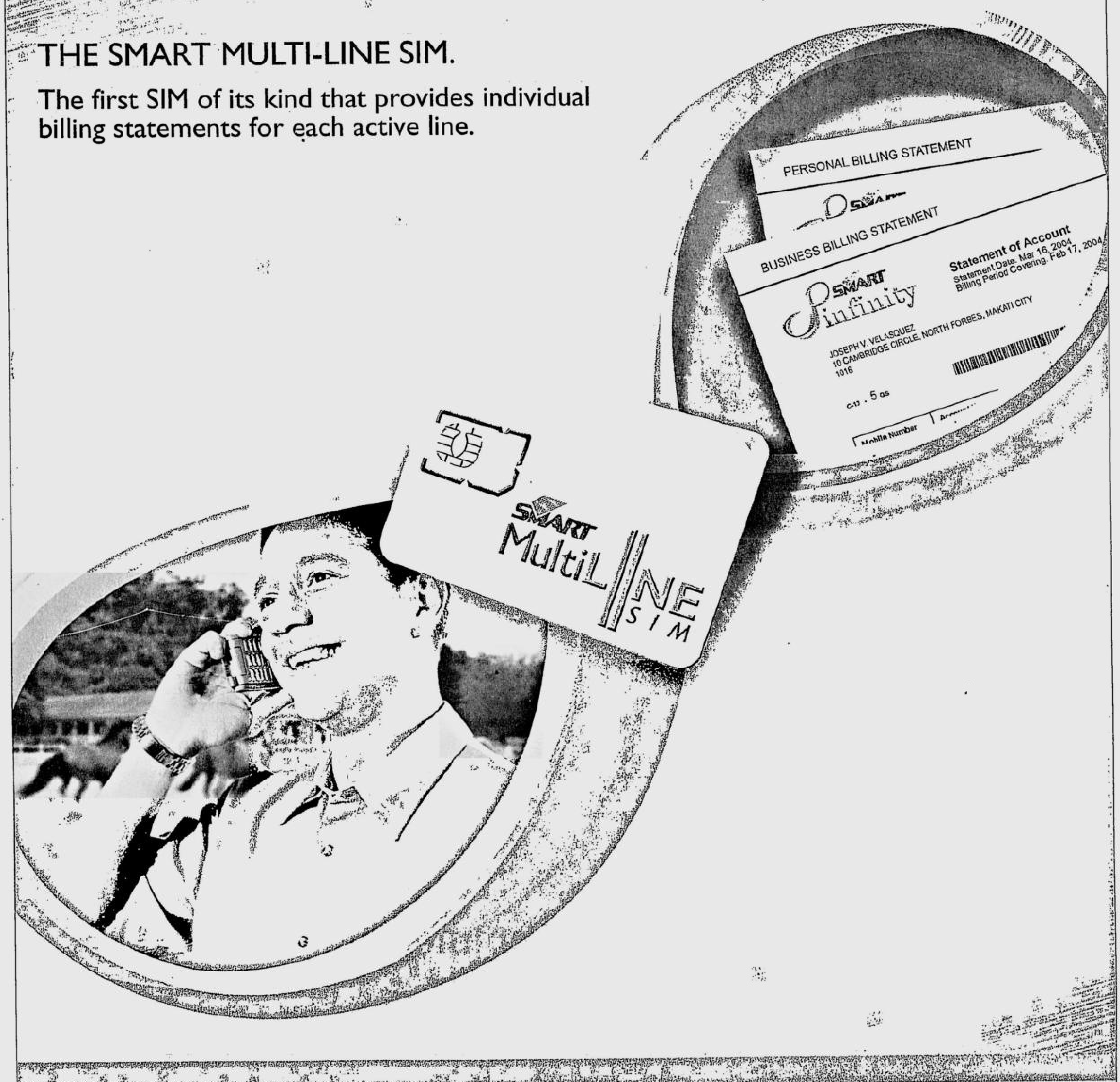
If you answered yes to any of these questions, you don't need an angel to appear to you in a dream to tell you to shift careers. It is time to reinvent yourself and change careers. However, beware of the following common errors that people make when they set out to change careers:

1. Consult a head-hunter. You must realize that a head-hunter's job is not to give you a job. He is paid by his client company to fill up a vacancy. Obviously, his loyalty is to the client and not to you. Of course, the head-hunter can consider you as one of the possible candidates if you have what it takes to do the job he is tasked to fill up.

However, head-hunters may not really help you change careers. Many head-hunters believe in the conventional wisdom that past performance predicts future performance. Therefore, you can end up doing a job in another company similar to the job you want to change. You might end up changing companies, but not careers.

2. Blame others for the rut you're in. Some people blame others for their sad state of affairs—a biased boss, too much "corridor" politics, the company's lack of career planning, etc. A friend has worked in 10 companies these past 15 years because of this paradigm. At age 55, he is still looking for the right company to retire in and always has a ready resume in hand wherever he goes. The lesson here is, before you plunge into a search for an ide-

COMMON/B13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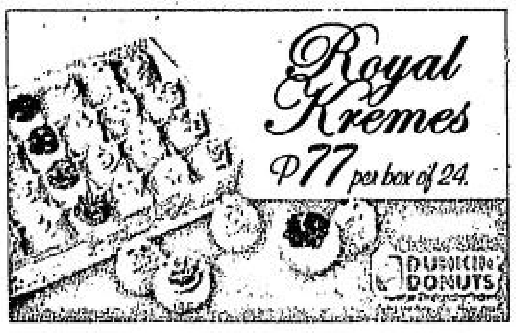

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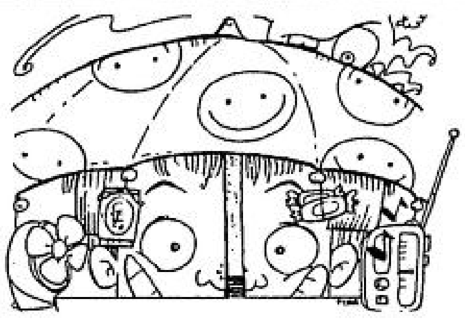
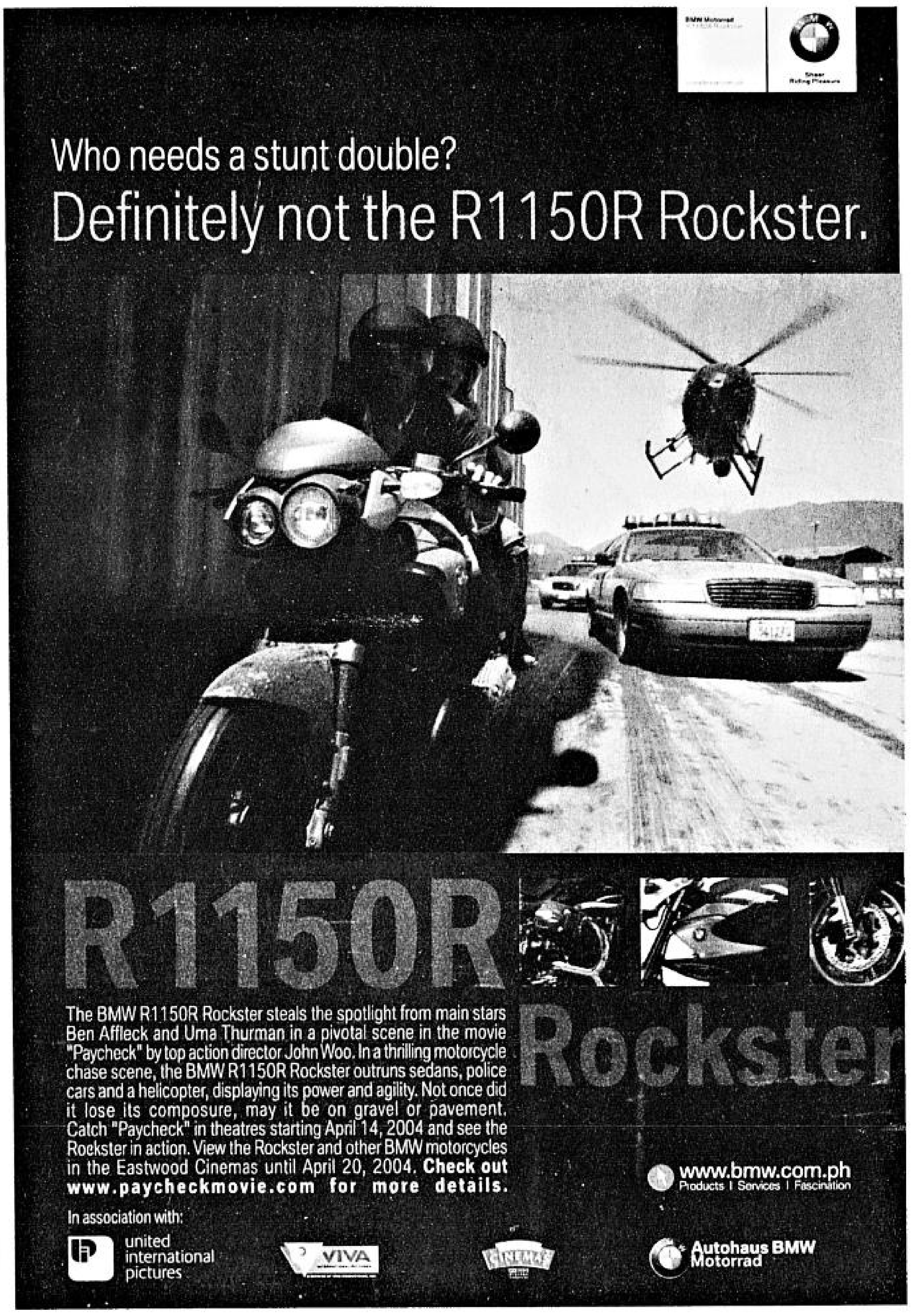


This week, we have a long list of things to keep you busy this summer. We've got the 411 on the best beaches, workshops, sports camps and review classes. And if you're running out of cash, we also have tips on how to make extra money for you to survive these allowance-free days. Get off that couch and prepare your blueprint for the season. But if the procrastination fairy has sprinkled her magic dust on you, just sit back, put your feet up and enjoy the rest of this issue.



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R1150R Rockster

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summer workshopping

By Catherine Young
2bU! Correspondent

MY summer vacations have always involved learning of some kind. I've been through piano teachers, art professors, language tutors and taekwondo coaches. While my peers would peruse resort catalogs, I would be poring over workshop brochures.

These days, summer workshops are ubiquitous, and in many cases, are the most ideal way to learn something you've always wanted to. The sessions are long enough for you to know the basics, but short enough for you to keep your attention span.

There are three reasons why I've been doing this every summer. The first is that it is easier to learn something when you're young; memory is strong and the windows to learning are still open.

As a 20-year-old, I've realized that I learn pretty fast, perhaps because of the variety of fields I've immersed myself into since I was five. The second is that you rarely have time to learn something new when you're older, and you end up postponing your "To Learn" list until years have passed.

Finally, I got to explore several fields as a child since I had wanted to be many things. Taking workshops enabled me to see which were just hobbies and which were potential career options.

Language

Peter Mayle's books have always made me want to live in France, but since I have to finish college here, the Louvre would just have to wait. Until then, I would have had to learn the language some time in my life, so I decided to take up French for a few summers.

I was 14 when I started with a tutor who also helped me out with my Chinese; we devoted one hour for each language per visit. For me, getting a personal tutor was a good idea because of the difficulty of the French pronunciation; I spent 15 minutes gargling Coke to be able to sound out the letter 'R,' which was very different from the English or the Filipino way.

I also benefited from combining two languages at the same time; there were some French syllables that were better compared to Mandarin than English.

The summer before my freshman year in college, I enrolled in a small French class in UP because of the student discount. This time, being in a group was a great idea because we all learned from each other's mistakes and had fun while doing it. We were a menagerie of different people—there was a writer, a radio announcer, a teacher and students from different backgrounds.

> Off-school short-term courses are the most ideal way to learn something you've always wanted to

SUMMER/ C2

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Summer workshopping

From page C1

Photography

That same summer, I signed up for a black and white photography workshop in UP (see 2bU!'s workshop directory for contact information). This was, without a doubt, the most satisfying workshop I have ever had.

It was an excellent program for people like me who loved the art but had little technical experience. Learning photography in black and white allowed me to experience it in its purest form.

In the beginning, we had to shoot pictures within the campus, which allowed me to be familiar with the place before my freshman year began. Later, we had a Quiapo trip to shoot human-interest pictures. I filled up two clear books with 8" by 10" photos I shot, developed and printed myself. I used the camera of my grandfather who passed away seven months before the workshop, giving the class a sentimental value to me.

I'm still friends with my teacher until now. And as a UP student, I was given 500 bucks off. To top it off, I won my first photo contest after this workshop using the very pictures I took. I got my money's worth, two awards, and best of all, a great friendship.

Sports

After months of exercising the mind, there comes a point when we have to pay attention to our bodies as well.

Tennis, taekwondo and swimming were the sports I was exposed to during my summers. These classes tested not only my endurance and fitness, but gave me self-confidence. Nowadays, the choices are innumerable and are not limited to the more "traditional" sports like basketball. Badminton courts are everywhere, and cool sports such as fencing, archery and martial arts are also available.

Art

For years, art classes were my default workshops. My education on color and techniques was very broad, from wax crayons to watercolors to charcoals. Although I was tired of these after a few years, they allowed me to explore my creativity at an early age.

The advantage now is that I am still able to draw and paint even in a field that does not train us to do so. And in the midst of long experiments, art is always something I can turn to to relieve stress.

E-mail the author at cathy_young1@yahoo.com

2bU! Summer Workshop Directory

ART AND PRODUCTION

U.P. Film Institute, Diliman

Contact Laisa at 9263640, 9250286, or UP Trunkline 9205301 loc. 4589

E-mail upfilminstitute@hotmail.com

Download form from http//www.upd.edu.ph/~film_ctr/works.html and fax to (632)9262722

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2 sessions, 15 participants each

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SPORTS

Moro Lorenzo Sports Center, Ateneo de Manila University

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1. Badminton

- First Module: April 12 to May 4
- Second Module: May 7 to May 29

(10 sessions/module)

MWF or TThS

6 years old and up

2. Sports Wall-Climbing

April 12 to May 29

6 sessions

Mondays to Saturdays

3 years old and up

3. Basketball

- First Module: April 12 to May 23
- Second Module: May 3 to 14

(10 sessions/module)

Mondays to Fridays

7 years old and up

4. Ballet

April 13 to May 27

14 sessions

Tuesday and Thursdays

6 years old and up

5. Brazilian Jiu-jitsu

April 14 to May 28

Wednesdays and Fridays

7 years old and up

6. Taekwondo

April 12 to May 26

Mondays and Wednesdays

7 years old and up

7. Karatedo

April 5 to May 29

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Go ahead, take a break

By Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent

It may be better to rest before going to college instead of enrolling in review classes

WHILE most will be in high gear for the long vacation, there'll be a few—no, make that a lot of—students who'll spend the break listening to lectures and taking down notes.

The unfortunate students? Incoming high school seniors who will take review classes to prepare for college entrance examinations.

High school students giving up summer to review for college entrance exam has become common in the past few years. Before, students just took the test and waited for the results. But now, review classes are making money from the students' anxiety. Some even hire celebrities to endorse their services. Would Maxene Magalona's face on a billboard help students get into college?

Promises, promises

"Pass the Upcat/Acet/DLSU tests!" Advertisements promise a lot, just stopping short of guaranteeing the student sure entry into his/her school of choice.

But what do the review classes do? They cram almost everything you've learned (or have yet to learn) in high school, focusing on Mathematics, Science and Language, the main components of college entrance exams.

Lecturers explain theories and formulas and give out lengthy handouts for home study. Exams that supposedly are just like the real thing are held regularly. In other words, review classes are just like regular classes—minus the fun.

Do the review classes really help people get into prestigious schools? Only if students have already developed good study habits before attending such classes.

The classes don't produce miracles—you still won't be able to figure out the theory of relativity or quote Shakespeare if you haven't learned them during the regular school year.

But many people believe the classes will get them the college slot they want. High school seniors say, "*Ang baba ng* grades *ko* last year, *kailangan ko mag*-review class *para pumasa naman ako sa matinong* college."

False expectations

Fact is, while the entrance tests are important, high school grades play a big role, too. Passing the entrance exams will still not get you to a top university if your report cards are studded with D's.

Many people get terrific grades in the Upcat (top 10 percent, even), but still don't make the cut because of their high school grades.

Also a review center's claim of having former students making it to top schools, doesn't mean much. All it proves is they had a lot of bright students, who probably did not even need the review center in the first place.

Review classes are useless if the students don't make the most of them. Some simply stare at the board, take home the handouts, and cheat during exams. With many review sessions even longer than regular classes, many students skip them after a while or sit in for half a day then go elsewhere.

Exercise in futility?

Review classes may provide one or two useful tips for college entrance tests, but many of the things they cover aren't really necessary for the test itself (contrary to popular belief, college entrance exams aren't that scary).

But if you think you can endure long lectures (none of those "alternative learning experiences" from creative teachers) and need to prepare for entrance exams, or simply want to learn more for the coming school year, then go enroll in a review class.

But if you're taking it just because you have nothing to do this summer, or all your friends are enrolled, then forget it. You'll waste your money and time-sports camps might be better options. A couple of months in a sport camp may just make you good enough to try out for a university varsity team.

E-mail the author at biancaconsunji@yahoo.com

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workshopping

From page C1

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Mondays to Fridays
7 years old and up

4. Ballet
April 13 to May 2[illegible]
14 sessions
Tuesday and Thu[illegible]
6 years old and up

5. Brazilian Jiu-jitsu
April 14 to May 29
Wednesdays and Frida[illegible]
7 years old and up

6. Taekwondo
April 12 to May 26
Mondays and Wednesdays
7 years old and up

7. Karatedo
April 5 to May 29
Mondays and Wednesdays
Age: 5 years old and up

LANGUAGE
- German

The Goethe-Institute
Call 7224671
- French

L'Alliance França[illegible]
http: www.alliance.ph
E-mail info@alliance.ph
Call 8132681

Spanish
Instituto Cervantes
E-mail icmanila@skyinet.net
Call 5261482-5

Go ahead, take a break

By Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent

HILE most will be in high gear for the long vacation, there'll be a few—no, make that a lot of—students who'll spend the break listening to lectures and taking down notes.

The unfortunate students? Incoming high school seniors who will take review classes to prepare for college entrance examinations.

High school students giving up summer to review for college entrance exam has become common in the past few years. Before, students just took the test and waited for the results. But now, review classes are making money from the students' anxiety. Some even hire celebrities to endorse their services. Would Maxene Magalona's face on a billboard help students get into college?

Promises, promises

"Pass the Upcat/Acet/DLSU tests!" Advertisements promise a lot, just stopping short of guaranteeing the student sure entry into his/her school of choice.

It may be better to rest before going to college instead of enrolling in review classes

But what do the review classes do? They cram almost everything you've learned (or have yet to learn) in high school, focusing on Mathematics, Science and Language, the main components of college entrance exams.

Lecturers explain theories and formulas and give out lengthy handouts for home study. Exams that supposedly are just like the real thing are held regularly. In other words, review classes are just like regular classes—minus the fun.

Do the review classes really help people get into prestigious schools? Only if students have already developed good study habits before attending such classes.

The classes don't produce miracles—you still won't be able to figure out the theory of relativity or quote Shakespeare if you haven't learned them during the regular school year.

But many people believe the classes will get them the college slot they want. High school seniors say, "*Ang baba ng* grades *ko* last year, *kailangan ko mag*-review class *para pumasa naman ako sa matinong* college."

False expectations

Fact is, while the entrance tests are important, high school grades play a big role, too. Passing the entrance exams will still not get you to a top university if your report cards are studded with D's.

Many people get terrific grades in the Upcat (top 10 percent, even), but still don't make the cut because of their high school grades.

Also a review center's claim of having former students making it to top schools, doesn't mean much. All it proves is they had a lot of bright students, who probably did not even need the review center in the first place.

Review classes are useless if the students don't make the most of them. Some simply stare at the board, take home the handouts, and cheat during exams. With many review sessions even longer than regular classes, many students skip them after a while or sit in for half a day then go elsewhere.

Exercise in futility?

Review classes may provide one or two useful tips for college entrance tests, but many of the things they cover aren't really necessary for the test itself (contrary to popular belief, college entrance exams aren't that scary).

But if you think you can endure long lectures (none of those "alternative learning experiences" from creative teachers) and need to prepare for entrance exams, or simply want to learn more for the coming school year, then go enroll in a review class.

But if you're taking it just because you have nothing to do this summer, or all your friends are enrolled, then forget it. You'll waste your money and time sports camps might be better options. A couple of months in a sport camp may just make you good enough to try out for a university varsity team.

E-mail the author at biancaconsunji@yahoo.com

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Play ball in camp this summer

ILLUSTRATION: ANTHONY MISTADES

New friends, better moves, fit body. All these and more await you when you join a sports clinic

By Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent

You may not relish the idea of learning a sport while someone's mom takes pictures every five seconds. It may be cramping your style to learn overhead passes and reverse lay-ups with a bunch of moms and *yayas* critiquing your every move ("*Naku, mas magaling si* Junior *sa mga iyan!*").

Still, there is a lot to be gained from sports clinics and not just the endless freebies like free shirts, drinks and gear.

I first joined a sports camp as a seventh grader hoping to get into the varsity basketball team. A whole caboodle of kids signed up for the tryouts. Although I was wanting in skills, my investment on a pair of I-mean-business shoes paid off. The coach included me in the lineup when he saw I was tall and was a product of Milo Best.

Unfortunately, a few months later, he realized I wasn't quite the basketball-star material he thought.

Learning the basics

Sports camps teach the fundamental skills required in whatever sport you are interested. In basketball, for instance, the clinics make sure you shoot the ball correctly and, before doing jump shots, you master ball handling.

The same is true for other sports: volleyball, badminton, archery, tennis. Many people do well without formal instruction on how to play a sport, but attending the camps develops the right techniques, correct common errors and the like.

Aside from skills, you acquire discipline. In the basketball camp I attended, latecomers had to do push-ups. Other offenses, such as too-long shorts, were also penalized. Water breaks were scheduled. You couldn't just grab your water jug when you felt like it, nor sit down while waiting for your turn to do a drill.

The first few sessions were tough. I could barely walk, let alone do laterals across the court. Although I didn't want to go back for more torture, somehow the discipline I learned made me pick up myself and go back to the court.

Facing your future

If you're aspiring to join the varsity team, sports camps will enable you to meet future teammates or opponents. Lots of kids get into the varsity because coaches look for potential players in the camps.

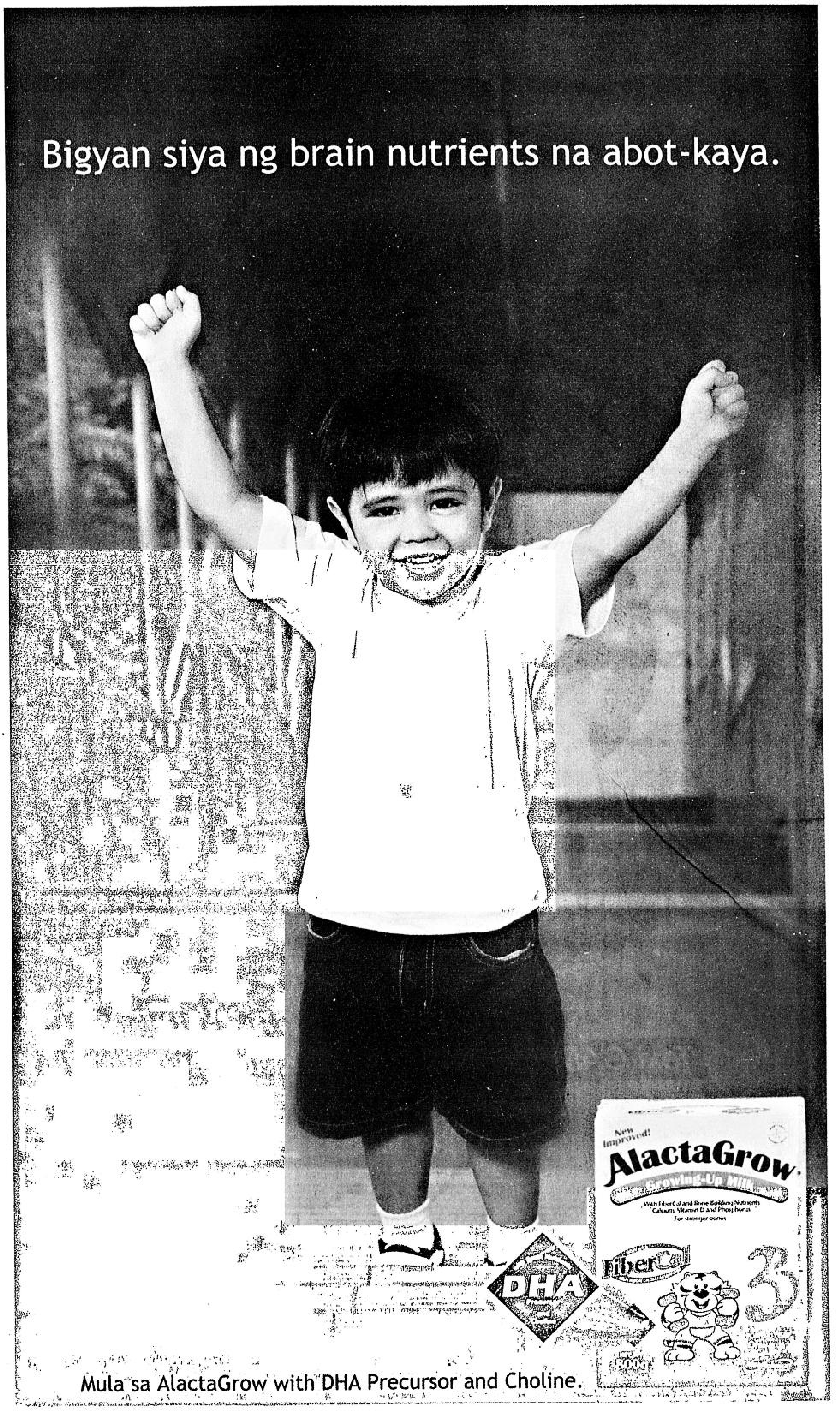
Some athletes have even moved from the camps to the professional league. A few sports camps have alumni who made it to the *Palarong Pambansa*, international competitions, even the Olympics. Others hire celebrity coaches/athletes to train potential superstars.

Sports camps can cost thousands of pesos but the expense is worth it if you're planning to get serious about any sport. And even if you're not, the friends you'll make, the skills you'll learn and the fit body you'll (hopefully) get, make it a good investment.

E-mail the author at biancaconsunji@yahoo.com

Some sport camps you might want to join

Adidas Sports Camp
Lozada Swimming School
8013949, 8719988
Milo Sports Clinics
Badminton: 3614543, 4136328
Basketball: 4116260, 3723065
Bowling: 6337054 to 55
Chess: 8268560
Football: 7271169
Gymnastics: 6352553
Ice skating: 6335008, 8000426
Karatedo: 6356608
Squash: 5633529
Swimming: 8991897
Table Tennis: 5221885
Taekwondo: 5220518 to 19
Tennis: 4282069, 9355673
Volleyball: 4116260, 3723066
Moro Lorenzo Summer Program Activities
Ballet, basketball, wall climbing, badminton, Karate, Taekwondo, Jujitsu: 4266001 local 4692
NBA Cheerleading Camp: 7269606, 7269397
Racela-MPG 2004 Summer Basketball Program: 6353257
Skywalkers Basketball Camp (Samboy Lim): 5317554
UP Summer Program Activities:
Aikido, archery, badminton, ballet, basketball, ballroom dancing, gymnastics, Hawaiian dancing, judo, karate, Pilates, soccer, swimming, street dance, table tennis, taekwondo, tap dancing, tennis, volleyball, yoga: 9296033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ball
in
this summer

ILLUSTRATION: ANTHONY MISTADES

New friends, better moves, fit body. All these and more await you when you join a sports clinic

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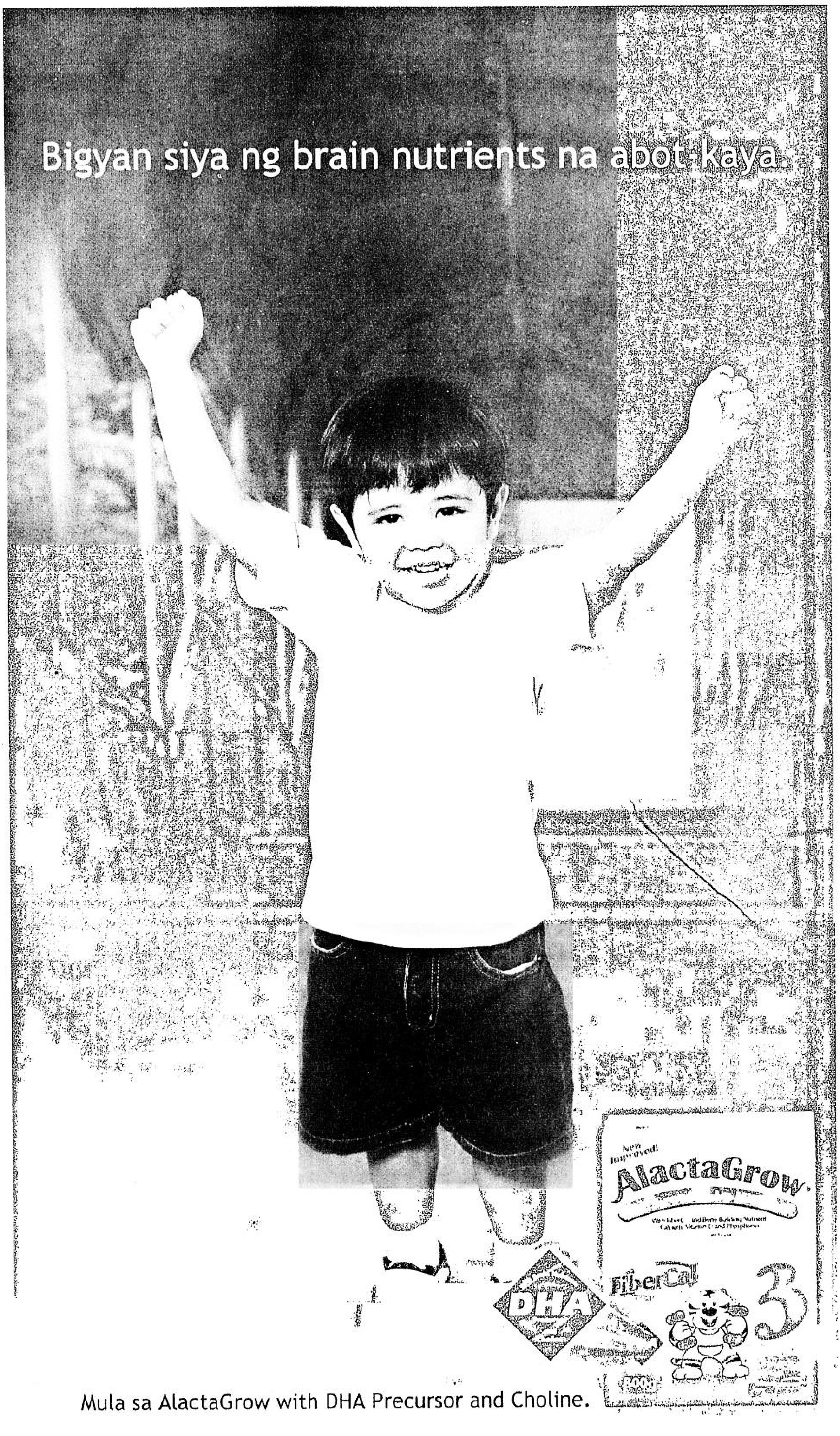
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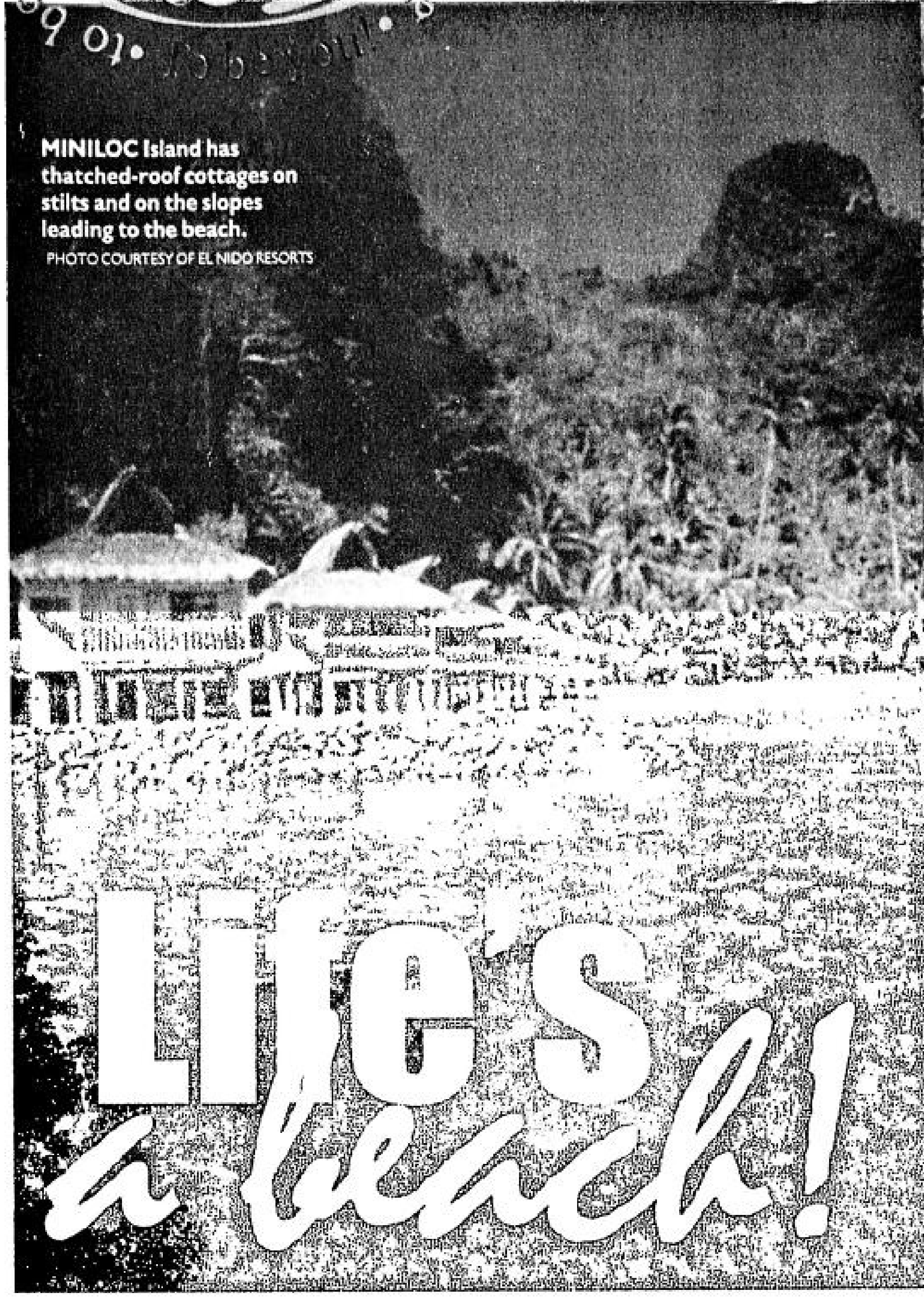
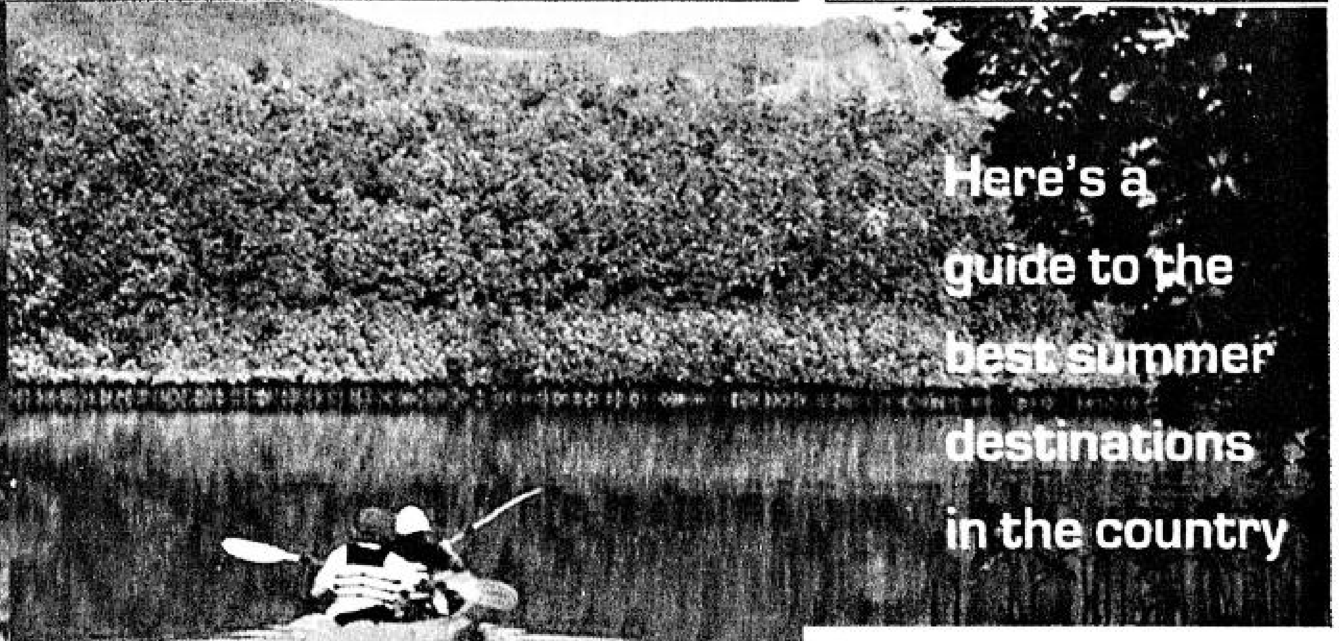


MINILOC Island has thatched-roof cottages on stilts and on the slopes leading to the beach.
PHOTO COURTESY OF EL NIDO RESORTS



Here's a guide to the best summer destinations in the country

Life's a beach!

By Chiquit Torrente
2bU! Correspondent

AH, SUMMER. While it's true that our tropical climate ensures warm and sunny days for over half of the year, the summer season really begins when the school year caps off mid-March and Holy Week ushers in the hot, hot days.

Naturally, this is also the season to hit the beach, so here's a list of favorite sun and sand destinations all over the country.

El Nido, Palawan

The ultimate paradise getaway in my book, El Nido's two islands, Miniloc and Lagen, allow you to experience the best of the country's last frontier, Palawan.

Kayak in the big and small lagoons of Miniloc and imagine yourself rowing down our own version of Middle Earth's majestic Anduin River. El Nido's breathtaking rock formations, where they say birds' nests are found (hence the name, El Nido), can compare to those of New Zealand.

Snorkel or dive in the clear, clean waters. Frolicking with the big, colorful fish will remind you how blessed our country is with natural resources. And if you prefer a more luxurious, urban-friendly atmosphere, you'll feel right at home in Lagen, which has a pool and spa services.

Getting there: Island Transvoyager Inc. flies straight from Manila to El Nido's airport; a motorboat ride will take you to either Miniloc or Lagen Island. Domestic flights via Puerto Princesa are also available.

The damage: Round-trip air fare is P8,800 while the minimum rate for a three-day, two-night stay is P15,500.

Book it: El Nido Resorts is managed by Ten Knots Development Corp., located at 2/F Builders Center, 170 Salcedo St., Legaspi Village, 1229 Makati. Call 8945644, fax 8103620 or visit www.elnidoresorts.com

Boracay, Aklan

One of the world's best beaches, Boracay's powdery-soft white sand is a definite must-see. The locals keep the beaches and the water amazingly clean, despite the surge of commercialism Boracay has experienced in the past decade.

New developments such as "D'Mall at Boracay" and door-to-door restaurants and bars ensure that Boracay never sleeps. If you really want to get away from it all (and you will, because stations one to three is like Makati's Greenbelt populace transplanted to the beach), ferry over to Puka Beach at the opposite side of the island, said to be the first beach in Boracay discovered by German backpackers. Today the locals make sure no structures detract from that perfect stretch of beach.

Getting there: Boracay is only accessible by sea. There are ferry services from Caticlan, which has an airport for smaller flights. Other domestic flights, such as Cebu Pacific, land in Kalibo, from where buses take you on a zigzag road to Caticlan.

The damage: Airfare ranges from P5,330-P6,251. A three-day, two-night stay is a cool P4,099-P4,999 for triple/twin sharing.

Book it: Pink Patio Resort can arrange your whole Boracay trip for you from Manila. They're at 12/F Multinational Bancorp Center, 6805 Ayala Ave., Makati. Call 8452222 to 27, fax 8452233 or visit www.pinkpatio.com. In Boracay, call (036) 2883888 to 3999. Other resorts are also listed in the book "The Boracay Lifestyle."

Mactan Island, Cebu

It's really shangri-la, forgive the pun, at Shangri-La's Mactan Island in Cebu, especially for families. Considered the country's largest exclusive de luxe resort, Shangri-La has a bevy of fun pool activities for the children to allow adults to enjoy the picturesque beach, five-star hotel service and food without worrying about tiny voices piping up, "Mommy, I wanna go home!"

Mactan Island has become a favorite destination among Asian tourists, most specifically Koreans, Taiwanese and Japanese, so just be prepared for the bit of noise big groups usually make.

Getting there: Mactan Island has an international airport, so you can skip the urban chaos of Manila and fly straight to Cebu via Philippine Airlines if you're coming from abroad. From Manila, all major domestic airlines fly to Cebu on a daily basis, and Shangri-La Mactan Island is just a half-hour's drive from the airport.

Book it: Contact Shangri-La's Mactan Island at Punta Engaño Road, PO Box 86, Lapu-Lapu City 6015, Cebu, Philippines. Call (32) 2310288, fax (32) 2311688 or e-mail mac@shangri-la.com

Panglao Island, Bohol

I went to Bohol on a day trip from Cebu via the SuperCat, so I'm going to say don't just go there for the clean, yet-to-be-commercialized beaches of Panglao Island.

Bohol is also home to the famed Chocolate Hills and the Loboc River, the longest river in the Philippines. A bus tour of Bohol's historical churches—eerie stone architecture most of which were built during the Spanish era

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TOP CHARTS

OPM HITS

1	Alam Kong Di Ako, Okey Lang	*Bayani Agbayani*	**TONE OKEYLANG**
2	Miss Flawless	*Angelica Jones*	**TONE FLAW**
3	Ayoko Na Sa'yo	*Mahal & Mura*	**TONE AYOKO**
4	Otso-otso	*Bayani Agbayani*	**TONE OTSO**
5	Kung Ako Na Lang Sana	*Bituin Escalante*	**TONE KUNGAKO**
6	Bakit Pa Ba	*JR*	**TONE BAKITPABA**
7	Stop Think	*Aliya Parcs*	**TONE STOP**
8	Kailan Ka Darating	*W. Cornejo & R. Alejandro*	**TONE KAILANKA**
9	Kahit Kailan	*South Border*	**TONE KAHITK**
10	214	*Rivermaya*	**TONE 214**

RETRO HITS

1	Build Me Up, Buttercup	*Sound Alike*	**TONE BUTTERCUP**
2	Eternal Flame	*Bangles*	**TONE ETERNAL**
3	Dancing Queen	*Abba*	**TONE DANCEQUEEN**
4	Baby I'm A Want You	*Bread*	**TONE BABYIM3**
5	Bohemian Rhapsody	*Queen*	**TONE BOHEMIAN**
6	Is It Okay If I Call You Mine	*Paul McCrane*	**TONE CALLUMINE**
7	I Think We're Alone Now	*Tiffany*	**TONE ALONENOW**
8	Sweet Home Alabama	*Lynard Skynard*	**TONE SWEETHOME**
9	It Might Be You	*Stephen Bishop*	**TONE MYTBU**
10	Hey Jude	*J. Lennon/P. McCartney*	**TONE HEYJUDE**

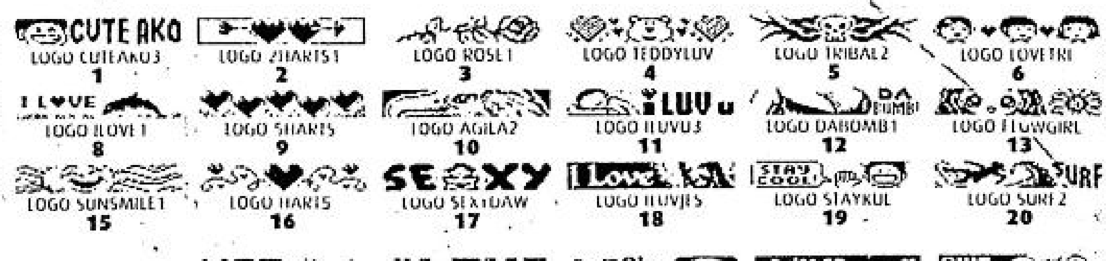
POP HITS

1	Redblooded Woman	*Kylie Minogue*	**TONE REDBLOOD**
2	Toxic	*Britney Spears*	**TONE TOXIC**
3	I Promise I Will	*Stacie Orrico*	**TONE IPROMISE**
4	Addicted	*Enrique Iglesias*	**TONE ADDICTED**
5	I'll Be	*Edwin McCain*	**TONE IBE**
6	Fallen	*Sarah McLachlan*	**TONE FALLEN1**
7	The Voice Within	*Christina Aguilera*	**TONE VOICEW**
8	Asereje	*Los Ketchup*	**TONE ASEREJE**
9	Powerless	*Nelly Furtado*	**TONE POWERLESS**
10	Guilty	*Blue*	**TONE GUILTY**

ALTERNATIVE HITS

1	Unwell	*Matchbox 20*	**TONE UNWELL**
2	Awit Ng Kabataan	*Rivermaya*	**TONE KABATAAN**
3	Toyang	*Eraserheads*	**TONE TOYANG**
4	Teenage Dirtbag	*Wheatus*	**TONE TEENAGE**
5	Butterfly	*Crazytown*	**TONE BUTTERFLY1**
6	Hella Good	*No Doubt*	**TONE HELLAGUD**
7	Clint Eastwood	*Gorillaz*	**TONE CLINTEAST**
8	The Beautiful Occupation	*Travis*	**TONE BOCCUP**
9	Song For The Dumped	*Ben Folds Five*	**TONE 4DDUMPED**
10	Clocks	*Coldplay*	**TONE CLOCKS**

TOP LOGOS



TOP PIC MESSAGES

HOT BABE!
PIC HOTBABE2
1
I LOVE YOU
PIC ILOVEUS
2
pamela WAN
PIC PAMELA1
3
you're so sweet
PIC SOSWIT
4
GIVE ME A HUG
PIC GIVEHUG
5
love
PIC SWANLOVE
6
PIC TAWABOY
7
LABS KITA BABY
PIC LABABY
8
PIC 2DOLPHINS
9
I'm in love
PIC DOGLOVE
10

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To send a tone, TONE OKEYLANG 09181234567.
To send a picture message, PIC GIVEHUG 09181234567.

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P15.00 for every successful download. Download now! Questions? Comments? Concerns? Call the SMART Hotline at 888-1111, text us at 888 (P1.00 per message sent in excess of the FREE TEXT allocation), e-mail us at customercare@smart.com.ph, or visit the SMART Wireless Center nearest you.
Note: In order for you to identify which musical work the ring tone in question is based on, we have, in addition to the song title, selected an artist who has made the song well known. The artist in question has not participated in the production of the ring tone.

SMART Simply Amazing!

When do I assume he likes me?

Niño Mark Sablan
& September Mabino

DEAR Mark and Sep,

You meet someone and there's this automatic "light feeling" for that someone. And then you somehow morph into friends. And then you wake up one day with the impression that you both like each other.

But there are instances when he slips out quietly when you're together (you sometimes stay together out late even until 2-3 a.m.) and make a phone call after reading a text message. Then you have this gut feeling that it's his girlfriend. So you suppress all your feelings for that person because you assume he has a girl.

One friend tells you he has just broken up with his girl. Which, deep within, gives you something to look forward to.

And then you see him with someone in the mall. Again, this gut feeling tells you that's the girl. He sees you too. But he doesn't approach you even though you're with all his *barkada*, who are all surprised to see him with the girl, but don't say a word.

Then one friend slips out to meet him, but when asked by other friends who that girl is, he says, "*Ewan ko dun*"—within your hearing distance.

It's confusing, and then again, you try to let the feeling go. But lately, you feel he's trying to make a serious conversation. You avoid that conversation. You dread that conversation.

Finally, you decide that the next time he wants to talk, you'll be brave enough to face whatever he'll tell you. But that next time hasn't come yet. What should you do?

BEGGAR

What you should do is patiently wait for him to start that dreaded serious conversation (if ever he still wants to fill you in on certain things) and be brave enough not to go into hiding when that time comes.

If ever you feel a little more adventurous and courageous than your usual self, approach him and start some chitchat that could lead to more important topics.

What you should do is to not assume a lot. You might have jumped out of bed one very early morning with the impression that you both like each other, but this doesn't mean it's true. For all you know, he may like you the way he likes his big toe or his pet iguana.

What you should do is to entertain the thought that he may be using you to make his girlfriend jealous. You might also want to believe that you're not the only one in his phonebook.

What you should do is free yourself from all these confusion by not assuming that he likes you. He's living his life the way he wants to live it, while you seem to be spending every minute of your life puzzled.

Don't be at the losing end by forever waiting and putting your life on pause mode. Meet others and see if some more automatic light feelings will surface. See if you can meet cuties and somehow morph into friends and even lovers with them.

MARK

It's, er, good that you haven't been assuming too much with this guy, or else you would've been deep in damage control mode now. But you didn't write to us just to hear us assess what you've been doing so far, right?

What to do next... To be honest, I'm pretty much as stumped as you are. Only the guy knows what is making him act this way, and until he tries to have a serious talk with you again, we'll never know what's eating him.

Unless you have the guts to start that conversation yourself. Do you?

If yes, then maybe there'd be a bit more equity in this bizarre relationship. For once, you'd be getting, hopefully, a straight answer straight from the babe's mouth instead of vague secondhand "I dunnos."

If no, then be prepared to wait indefinitely for the guy to speak up. As I have the feeling that you prefer this option more than the first one, I'd also tell you that while you wait for him to talk, try to put on emotional blinders and temporarily forget the special times you've been having with him.

After all, so far, the two of you are just friends. Psyche yourself to truly believe that until circumstances (read: the guy) tell otherwise.

Now what would you do?

SEPTEMBER

E-mail the writers at markandsep@yahoo.com. Chatroom is inviting letter senders to indicate if they want their e-mail address printed so wannabe Marks and Seps out there can get in touch with problematic readers and send in their own comments and advice.

LG aircons.
We cool the World.

Cold Fact 1:

JARN
LG Electronics, World's Top for 4 Years
LGE did it again !
See Page 38.

LG is No.1 globally for 4 consecutive years. (Source: Japan Airconditioning, Heating and Refrigeration News)

Cold Fact 2:

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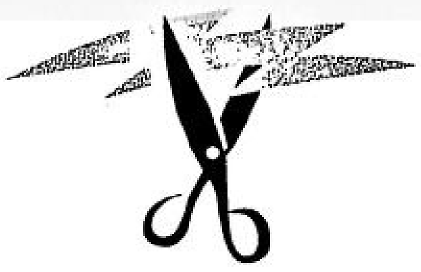
LG is known for its outstanding durability.

Cold Fact 3:



LG has superior economy on electricity consumption (HIGH EER SERIES)

Cold Fact 4:

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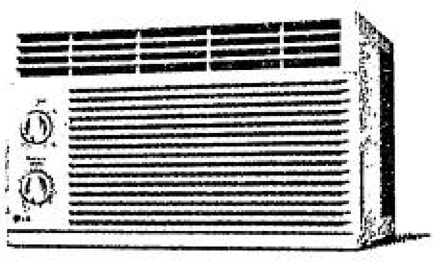

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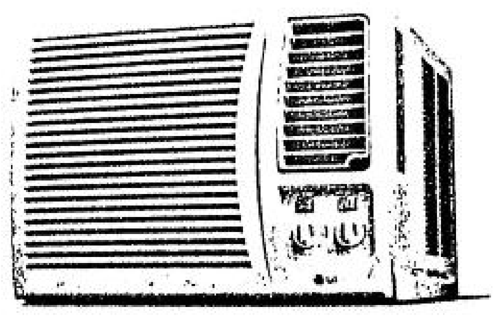
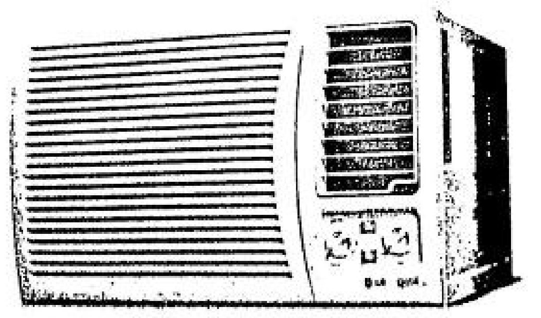
P6,995



LA100MP
1.0HP
P9,995



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Tel. Nos.: 641-4181 to 85; Fax: 640-0460; Customer Information Center: 640-2525

"Beyond Imagination". LG celebrates another year of success at its 2003 Dealers' Convention.

LG Electronics, Inc. launched a slew of new products during its 2004 Dealers' Convention. In recognition of the unwavering support of its valued Dealers, LG Electronics gave recognition to its Top Performers for the year 2003.

Innovation beyond your wildest dreams is how LG works wonders in your homes. As it makes another leap to give the best products right at your doorstep, they unveiled their latest products during their annual convention last March 15,2004 at the Isla Ballroom of EDSA Shangri-La Hotel.

With the theme "Digital LG Beyond your Imagination" their valued dealers, press and special guests were welcomed into the Digital world of LG. During that night, they launched their very best products, making it a journey of new trends in this world of information technology.

In today's competitive world only LG Electronics products can bring you to the fruits of advanced and innovative technology with amazing products to suit your lifestyle.

Among LG Electronics' innovations are home appliances like its washing machines, room air conditioners, and refrigerators. The top of the line front-loading washing machine adds elegance and convenience to any home. While the 13 kg capacity front-loading washing machine has the largest washing capacity of washing machines in the industry. It also boasts of a direct drive inverter that function with the lowest noise and vibration level.

The new generation Art Cool Air conditioners will surely make you feel comfortable in style. These are not only the products that will set you beyond your imagination. Another category is the Digital Display & Media product lines which are composed of consumer electronics like Color Television: Conventional, Flat TV, Projection TV and Plasma Display Panel, Audio/Video Products: DVD Players, DVD Home Cinema, DVD Components and even wireless home cinema system.

Other featured products were the LG Lafinion, the ultimate flat colored TV and the Wireless Home Cinema, the cutting edge for the audio-video technology. LG Electronics also boasts of its projection television with multiple "picture in picture" (PIP) windows that allows the viewer to watch a program and view 12 different channels simultaneously. Other products showcased during the convention were Mobile Phone Handsets to open the mind with the high technology they bring. With unceasing product innovations, LG Electronics has a myriad of quality product line-ups to satisfy the different needs of individual consumers at a surprisingly low cost.

One of the highlights of the convention was the awarding/recognition of LGs valued dealers for their achievements during the year 2003 plus the entertainment from Ms. Marissa Sanchez and a "mini-concert" Ms. Lani Misalucha.

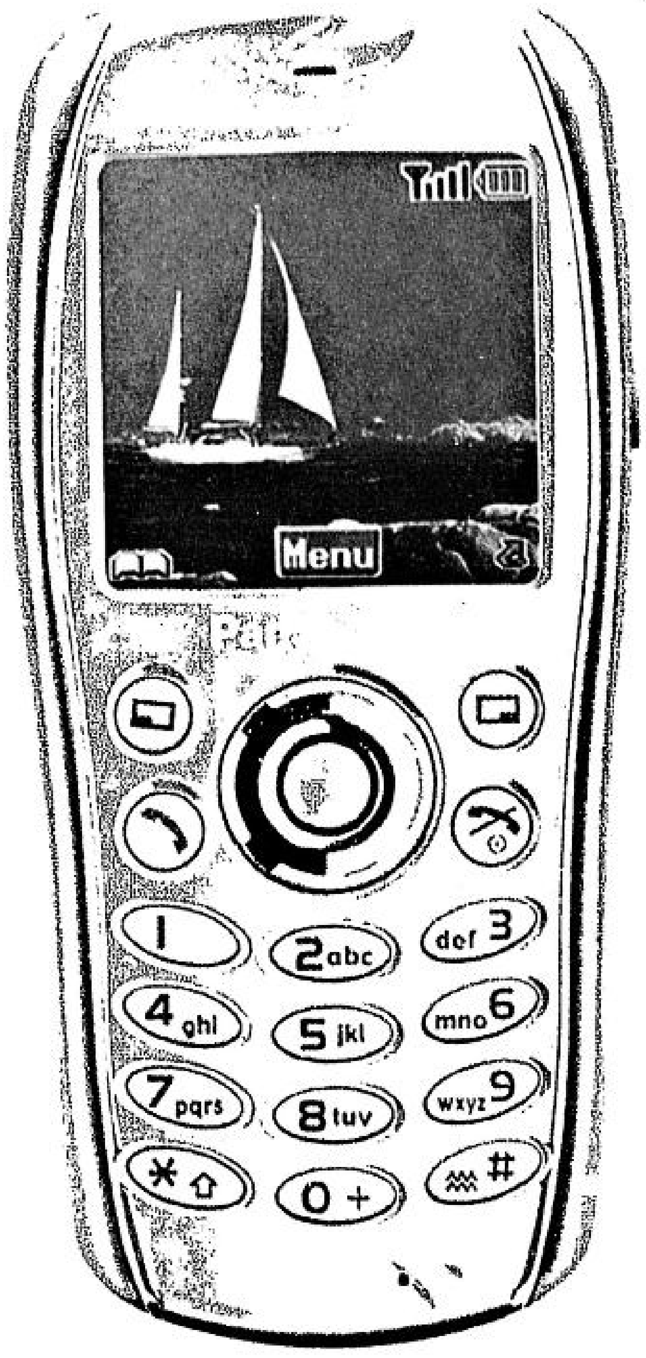
Established in Korea in 1958, LG Electronics steadily grows as a major force in the consumer electronics market, covering 76 subsidiaries and marketing units on a global scale. Through continuous research and development, LG Electronics constantly pioneers product advancements in three core sectors of the electronics industry: Digital Display & Media, Digital Appliance, and Telecommunications Equipment and Handsets.

For more information, please log on to www.lge.com or call LG's Customer Information Center at 640-2525.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Fancy new features but oh, so slow

2bU! gives one of the latest Panasonic cellular phones a test run



PANASONIC EB-G60

By Maui V. Reyes
2bU! Correspondent

The good stuff:

- MMS-enabled (MMS stands for multimedia messaging service), dual band, and all the basic stuff. With its 4096 color-screen, the Panasonic EB-G60 is capable of sending and receiving images (though a bit grainy). It has WAP (wireless application protocol), GPRS (general packet radio service), and 16 polyphonic ring tones. A big bonus is you can compose your own ring tones.
- Dictaphone. With its built-in speaker, you can take calls hands-free. It even has an auto-answer feature. A call is automatically answered, hands-free.

But what rocks is its Dictaphone—we now get to store recorded voice bites. The downside is each file has to be only 10 seconds.

- Image-in Sheet. In the grand tradition of unnecessary features hyped as a way to flaunt your individuality, the EB-G60's back cover has a transparent casing where you can insert a photo of your choice. Let's not forget the three built-in screen savers (our fave is the martial arts stick figures).
- Ample battery life. The EB-G60's battery life (1.6 to 5 hours for talk time, and 80 to 250 hours on standby) is quite impressive. Even when the battery bar displays ¼ power left, there is enough juice to last for at least an hour. That gives plenty of time to recharge the battery.
- Additional phone memory. This baby can store up to 100 phone numbers.

We'd rather forget:

- How slow it is. What usually takes less than 10 seconds to text on a Nokia, takes up to half a minute on this phone. The delay time can be extremely annoying—PIN (personal identification number) encoding takes about 10 seconds before the phone recognizes your SIM (subscriber identity module).
- Mass deleting may be impossible. Since the G60 stores every message sent (including drafts and unsent ones), memory can be eaten up pretty quickly. You have two options: delete each message one by one (which can take a lifetime), or select "delete all," which, depending on how many messages you have, can take two lifetimes.
- Not exactly the most user-friendly phone. Unless you've owned a Panasonic mobile before, this can be quite tricky (plus it's super slow). The five-directional key can be helpful, but navigation can be hard and confusing.

E-mail the author at volcanogirl28@hotmail.com.

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Life's a beach!

From page D1

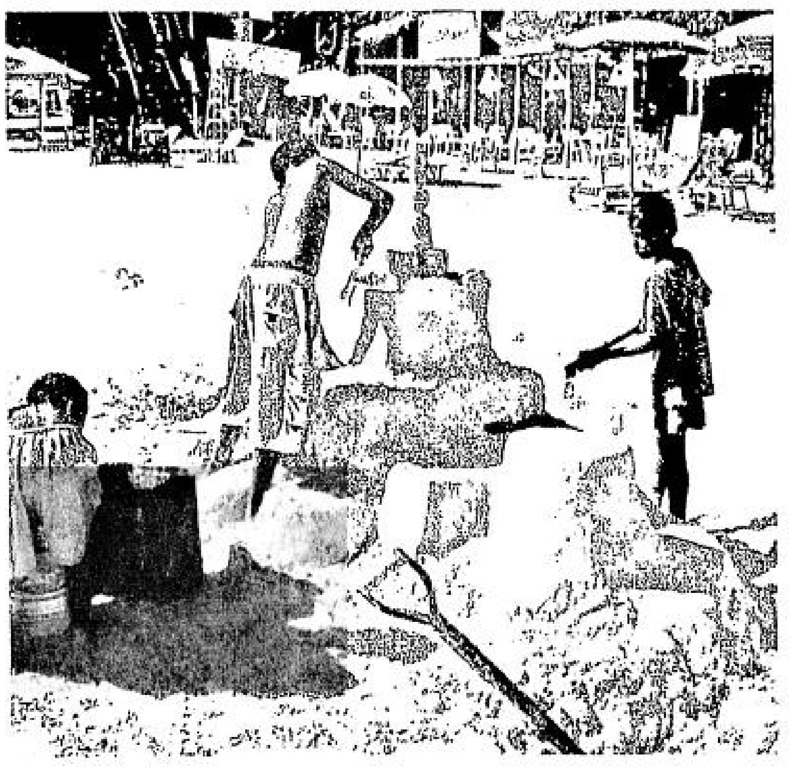
over 300 years ago—builds up to the Chocolate Hills, which is considered one of the seven natural wonders of the world.

A riverboat ride down Loboc River, with a lovely lunch prepared in banana leaves, a live band and a stopover at one of the tarsier sanctuaries along the river to pet the world's smallest marsupial ends the tour.

Getting there: Fly to Tagbilaran City; Panglao Island is a 30-minute ride via land. Or if you're coming from Cebu, take the SuperCat (ferry) over to Bohol.

The damage: A three-day, two-night package can go as low as P3,990, depending on dollar exchange rates and exclusive of air or ferry fare.

Book it: Contact Bohol Beach Club at phone (38) 4115222 to 24 and 5029204 or e-mail bbclub @mozcom.com



LOCAL kids building sand castles in Boracay

Dos Palmas, Arreceffi Island, Palawan

It's been an uphill climb for this small island resort ever since the terrorist group Abu Sayyaf kidnapped some tourists (including missionary couple Martin and Gracia Burnham) and staff in 2001. Plus, one of local moviedom's most promising heartthrobs had a fatal heart attack while vacationing in the resort.

But these days, it's been doing well. Approaching Dos Palmas is a breathtaking experience. Everything you need to truly escape the daily grind is there: country club amenities, hotel service, fresh seafood feasts, invigorating gardens, aqua sports and cozy cottages on stilts.

Getting there: Fly to Puerto Princesa, from where a boat transfer will take you to Arreceffi Island.

The damage: Starting at P9,576 per person per night exclusive of airfare, Dos Palmas package rates are offered in US dollars so the rates fluctuate seasonally.

Book it: Contact the Manila office at Unit 1005 Antel Global Corporate Center, Julia Vargas Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City. Call 6374226 or 6374236, fax 6374230 or e-mail info@dospalmas.com.ph. The Palawan Office is at 89 Lacao St., Puerto Princesa City, Palawan. Call (48) 4343118, fax (48) 4343119 or visit www.dospalmas

Pagudpod, Ilocos Norte

The latest northern beach locale I visited was Ilocos Norte. The burning sun and the white sands of Pagudpod guaranteed me a lovely tan! If you're game for a 10- to 12-hour ride to get to yet-to-be commercialized beaches, Ilocos Norte is for you.

Getting there: There are buses to Vigan, as well as PAL flights to Laoag.

Book it: Villa Angela can arrange your Pagudpod (or other beach resorts) trip for you from Vigan. Call 6819994 in Manila or (77) 7220419 in Vigan. Visit www.villangela.com, e-mail clverzosa@msn.com. Or go straight to Pagudpod, just call Saud Beach at (77) 7641005 for package rates and reservations.

Puerto Galera

The nearer and more economical alternative to Boracay, Puerto Galera in Mindoro, where you're sure to bump into someone —rather, several people—you know from Manila, is a four- to five-hour bus and ferry trip from the CBDs.

While the sand is a far cry from the powdery soft whites of Boracay, the waters are clear and perfect for snorkeling and diving.

Getting there: Buses from Pasay City will take you to the Batangas City Pier where you can get on any of the numerous ferries heading to Puerto Galera.

The damage: Gather at least four other friends so you can avail of the three-day, two-night package at Buri Beach for a cool P6,400++ each, inclusive of coach and ferry transfers.

Book it: Call Buri Beach at 8509381 and 8120722 or visit www.buri-resort.com

Balai sa Laiya, Batangas

BORACAY'S perfect sunsets contribute to its reputation as one of the world's best beaches.

More popular as a divers' resort, Balai sa Laiya is located in Laiya, Batangas, on the Anilao side of the province, not the Nasugbu side.

This is a down-to-earth place, perhaps like the earlier resorts in Boracay used to be—thatched roof cottages, uncluttered stretches of clean sand, few visitors, and warm bonfires (instead of party-all-night bars).

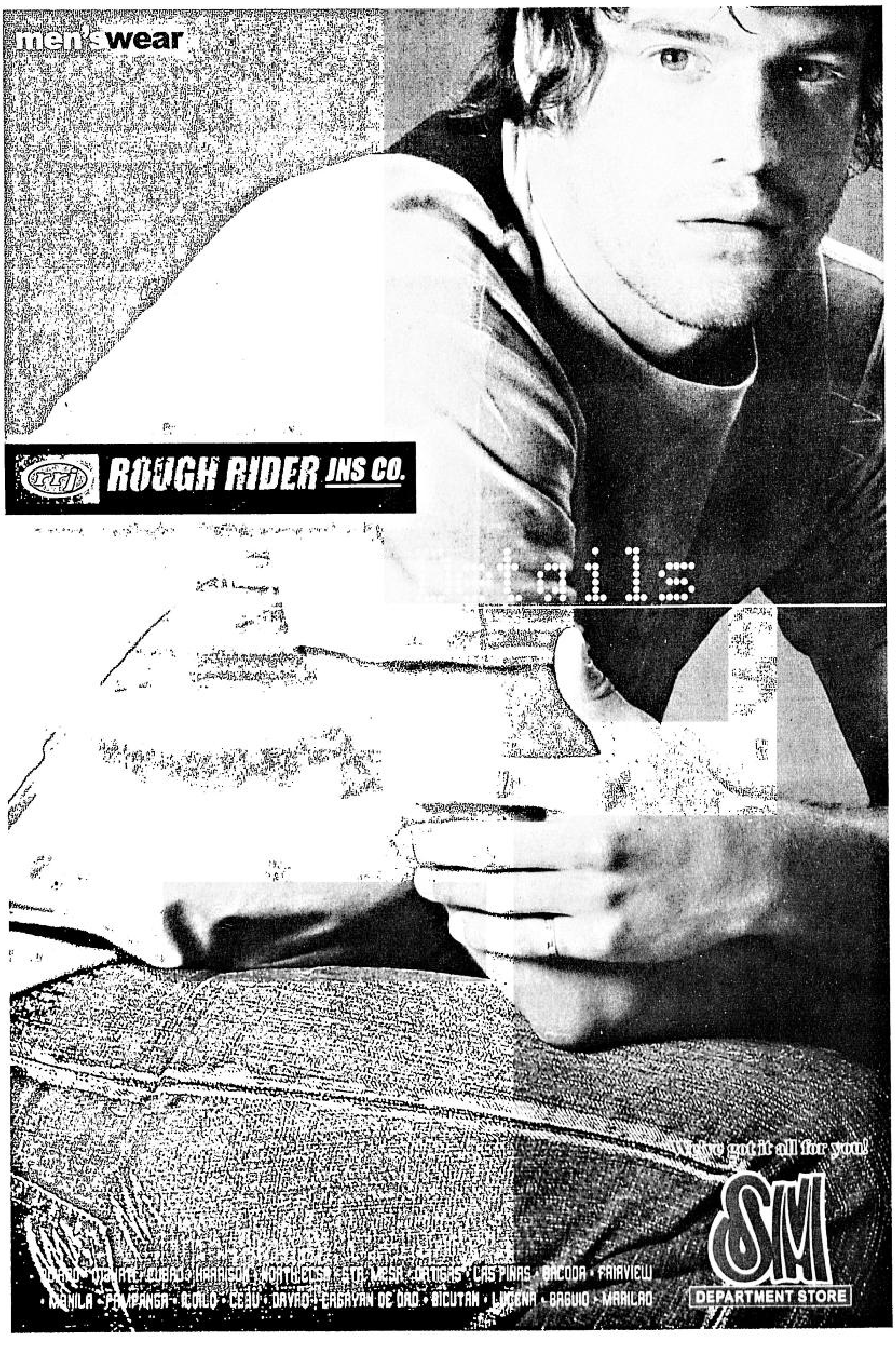
Upon arriving, a welcome drink of Balai's own tamarind concoction prepares you for kicking back and enjoying your weekend stay. Water sports are available, and the friendly staff is quick to set up whatever you require.

Down one end is a more affluent resort where television commercials are regularly shot, but the locals maintain the beachfront well, so Laiya is still pretty much a rural beach.

Getting there: Call Balai sa Laiya's office for directions to drive there from Metro Manila. Sorry, there's no public transportation to take you exactly to this spot of paradise.

The damage: P1,650 per person for a one-night stay (twin sharing). All meals are buffet-style. Ask ahead if they're serving their mouthwatering baked *tahong* or *bulalo* (beef stew) that Batangas is famous for.

Book it: Visit the Manila office at 124-B E. Rodriguez St., Concepcion, Marikina. Call 9971474 or 9432808; or visit www.balairesort.com



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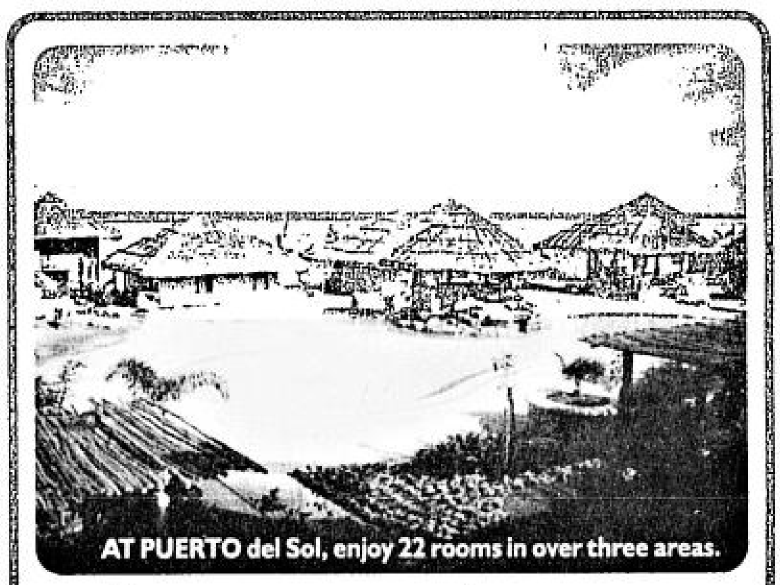

AT PUERTO del Sol, enjoy 22 rooms in over three areas.

Paradise in the North

Text and photos by Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

PANGASINAN is blessed with arguably the best beach resort-hotel in the North: Puerto del Sol.

The resort, located in the town of Bolinao, is the perfect hideaway for all those busy and stressed souls wishing for some serenity and visual beauty out of the city.

Puerto del Sol's Mediterranean feel is evident in its choice of colors, decoration and structure. Even the landscaping is exotic and lush, thanks to architect Arman Lorenzo, who is responsible for Greenbelt's landscapes.

Five-star service

Guests are guaranteed five-star hotel service, since the resort is managed by the Genesis Hotel and Resorts Corp., the first Filipino hotel management company responsible for managing nine other first class hotels and triple A resorts.

The resort boasts of 22 rooms spread out over three areas, each with its own special charm.

The Mansion Villa has 12 deluxe rooms with twin beds and balconies overlooking the whole resort, giving you a breathtaking view of the majestic sea. The exotic Bahay Kubo has four detached units with an open-air living and dining area. Its second level houses the bedroom with a king-size bed and a balcony. The Casitas are four two-bedroom units with living and dining areas. One slide of its all-glass door and you're more intimate with the ocean.

Puerto del Sol also has function rooms, a pool, a Jacuzzi and a chapel. Intricately decorated rafts are available for small gatherings, romantic meals or a truly moan-inducing massage to the tune of the waves.

The resort also offers tour packages to Bolinao's awe-inducing spots like its mystic caves, the 16th-century church of St. James, the giant clam nursery and the Patar white beach and lighthouse.

Treasure trove

The province of Pangasinan itself is a treasure trove of natural stunners, archaeological artifacts and rich marine resources.

The town of Bolinao is famous for its *bangus* and *pads*, a kind of premium *bagoong*. Mangoes and charcoal are also very abundant, and Puerto del Sol itself buys large chunks of the province's produce.

With its undeniably exotic feel and frame-worthy views, Bolinao's beaches have effortlessly attracted the cameras. Ruffa Gutierrez and Ina Raymundo had their movies shot here. Donita's Lux commercial took place in the town, while FPJ's San Miguel TV ad also made use of Bolinao's sceneries. In fact, the exact location where FPJ shot his commercial is now referred to as SMB.

So, there's a package for you: a great beach and a historic province all in one trip. Get packing, fellas.

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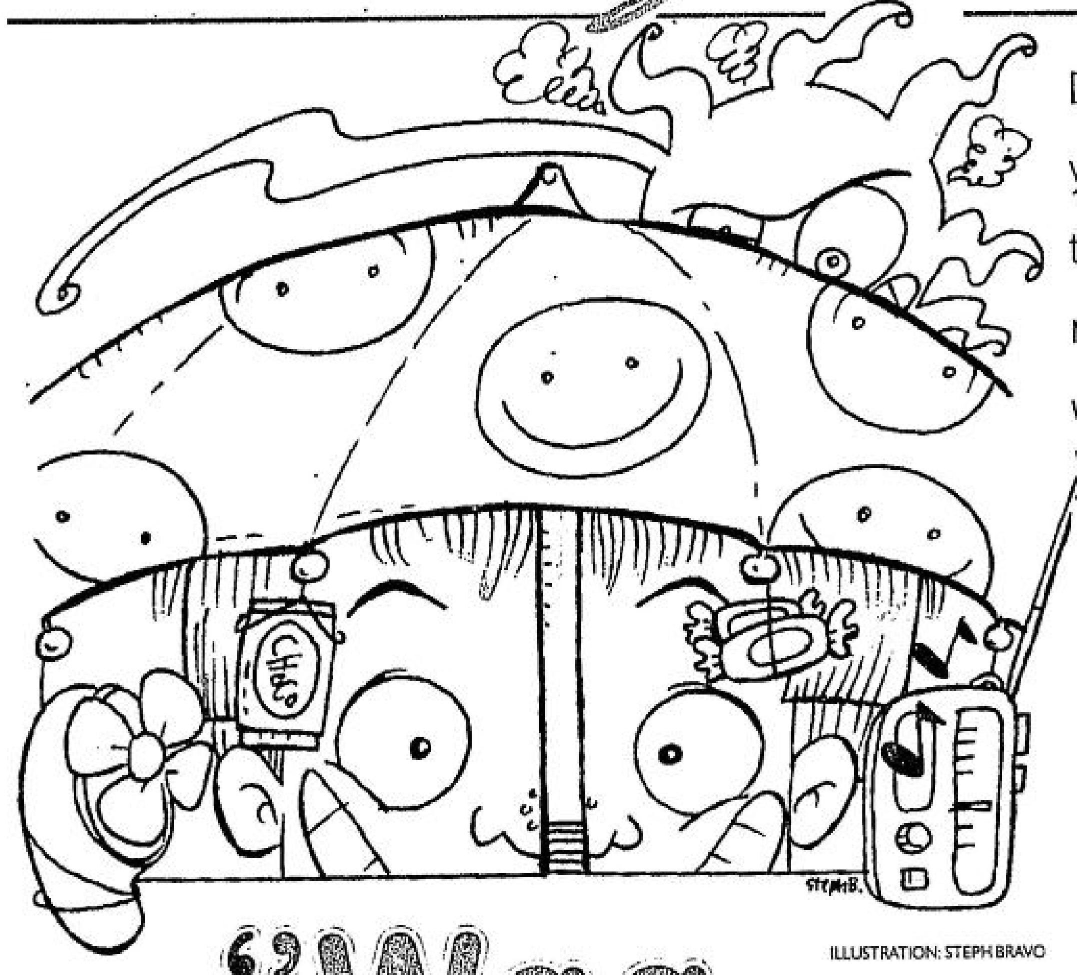


Don't let your temper match the weather

ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

'Wag na init ulo, baby'

By Ma. Sarah Carmela A. Miniano
2bU! Correspondent

WITH TEMPERATURES going nowhere but up, we should learn a few tricks to cool down and not let our tempers match the hot weather.

Here are a few suggestions:

Don't fight fire with fire. Never try "helping" someone in a foul mood when you're pretty worked up yourself. Bite that tongue, force a smile on your face and leave each other in peace.

Crank up the volume. Trust happy tunes to remind you of the fun you can have. Laugh yourself silly, sing yourself hoarse, and shake it like a Polaroid picture with Outkast's "Hey Ya." Go for the *walang-kamatayang* "All Star" by Smashmouth and you will find yourself grinning like Shrek in no time.

Gin Blossoms' "Follow You Down" is an instant pick-me-upper, with its catchy beat that conjure images of a yummy Matthew McConaughey on a motorcycle down a highway in "How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days."

Never feel too old for kiddie treats. Brush the dust off your old children's books and take a trip down memory lane with classics, fairy tales, even picture books if you wish. The familiar story lines and well-loved characters are guaranteed to make you forget that your whole *barkada* is partying in Boracay while you're stuck at home broke and bored.

Dr. Seuss offers the world's best cure for extreme cases of crabbiness. Steer clear of Grumpy, The Grinch and Oscar the Grouch, though.

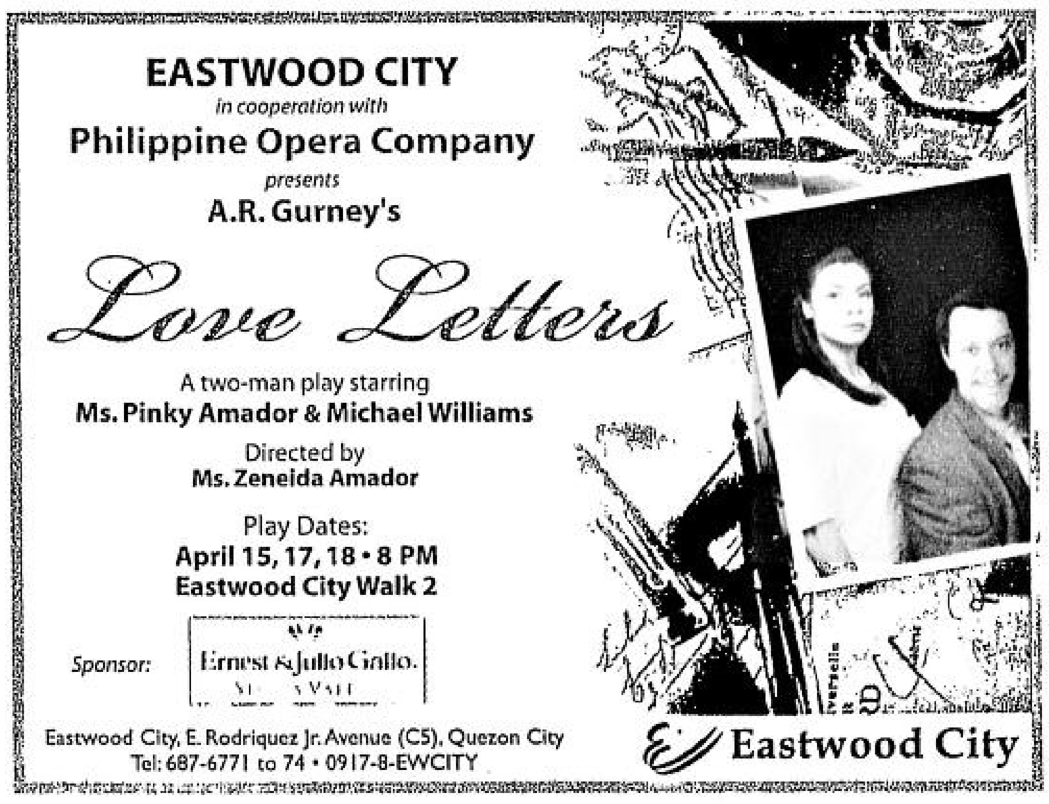
Don't underestimate the infinite power of chocolate. Try Selecta's new flavors (I hear the Choco Peanut ice cream is heavenly), or indulge in a sinful slice of Cookie Monster. If funds are desperately low, grab some of those cheap candy bars like Tofi-Luk and Safari; they taste almost as good as the expensive ones.

Go malling. Shop to your heart's content. Hunt for comfy flip-flops, bright tank tops and colorful accessories. Most stores have summer sales. You can find fab items at big discounts.

Seek help. From salons and spas, of course. Get a new haircut, have a facial, let the pros work their magic and convince you that the weather isn't the only thing "hot." Oh, and pray that your face is spared from those dreadful zit constellations that threaten to appear during the hot season.

Let off steam. Lash out in your journals, fill your blogs with rants about everything from the broken ceiling fan to the lack of intergalactic peace. You can say anything you want because, unlike real people with real angst to get rid of and real ears that can bleed from your constant whining, they won't talk back and tell you to get lost.

Don't forget the "B" word. Yes, folks: bed. When all attempts to lock up the raging bull inside you fails, retreat to the safety (and blissful air-conditioning) of your own rooms. Do the world a favor. *Itulog n'yo na lang yan.*



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LOGO SUMMER1 • LOGO HUGHART • LOGO MISSUDOG • LOGO 2INLUV • LOGO CATHINK • LOGO GODISLUV • LOGO URIH • LOGO CUTE1 • LOGO HIFACE • LOGO SOHOT1 • LOGO BORA • LOGO SUMRBODY • LOGO RACEBIKE • LOGO KITTENS3 • LOGO BADWORD • LOGO ITSABIRD • LOGO PUNKSTER • LOGO STARFISH1 • LOGO NITEMOON • LOGO TULOG1 • LOGO HOHN1
NEW PICTURE MESSAGES
PIC ANGPOGI • PIC SEKSI • PIC MERMAID1 • PIC SUMRSAYA • PIC BEACH2 • PIC TRULOVE1 • PIC LOTSLUV • PIC USPECIAL • PIC BROKEN2 • PIC 2CATSHI • PIC SMILEDYAN • PIC NOYPI1 • PIC PARTYPIG • PIC CHICKOTO • PIC SARAPB • PIC WAZZUP1 • PIC IMISSU • PIC KUMUSTA2 • PIC GUDPM • PIC CUTECAT2
NEW RING TONES
Mandy – Westlife – TONE MANDY
Sembreak – Eraserheads – TONE SEMBREAK
I'll Be There For You – Bon Jovi – TONE BETHERE4U
We Got The Beat – Gogo's – TONE WEGOTDBEAT
Promises – Kylie Minogue – TONE PROMISES
Abuse Me – Silverchair – TONE ABUSEME
Obsession – Kylie Minogue – TONE OBSESSION
Feel – Westlife – TONE FEEL
Dilirium – Pink – TONE DILIRIUM
Rock With You – Michael Jackson – TONE ROCKWU
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How to download a logo, ring tone or picture message:
1 Type in keyword. E.g. LOGO HUGHART, TONE MANDY or PIC BEACH2
2 Send to 288
3 Save upon receiving logo, ring tone or picture message.
Note: In order for you to identify which musical work the ring tone in question is based on, we have, in addition to the song title, referred an artist who has made the song well known. The artist in question has not participated in the production of the ring tone.
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JACK Black and his kiddie bandmates in "School of Rock"

Let 2bU! and RX 93.1 rock your world with 'School of Rock'

SCHOOL of Rock tells the tale of rock star Dewey Finn (played by Jack Black) who gets fired from his band and takes a job as a substitute teacher for fourth graders. The result is a hilarious movie that promises to give viewers a good time.

Catch the premiere screening of this movie on Tuesday, April 20, 7:30 p.m. at Robinsons Galleria's Cinema 2.

We're giving away two tickets to 25 lucky readers. Just tell us which musical instrument you want to play and why.

Send your answers to contest2bu@inquirer.com.ph along with your name, age, address and contact numbers. Entries must be in by noon on April 19.

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10 + 1 ways to earn extra dough this summer

By Dexter R. Matilla
2bU! Correspondent

OK. LET'S get down to business.

It's summer. Face it, no matter how much you dream, you're not going to Boracay, Palawan or Hong Kong.

You can't think of anything to do except wake up late, eat, take a nap, eat some more, watch television, eat again and sleep late. Not being productive, are you? You're thinking of getting a job as a crew at Jollibee or McDonalds but everybody else beat you to the punch and there are no more openings available. You return home frustrated.

But if that inner voice is telling you that you could actually do something and you can't think of what exactly where to start, let us help you. Here are 11 things you can do that can make your summer vacation a profitable one without having to apply for a job (especially if you don't like being bossed around).

1. Set up a *halo-halo* stand. It tends to get very hot during summer (duh!). And no other product gets to be more in-demand than the *halo-halo*. You can set up your *halo-halo* stand in your garage or wherever it is that's accessible.

What you will need: a sturdy table, an ice grater, and all the other ingredients needed to make a *halo-halo* (banana, white beans, *macapuno*, *langka*, white sugar, *gulaman*, *ube*, leche flan, red *monggo*, a can of evaporated milk, and toasted *pinipig*, a half gallon of ice cream).

How much you can charge: a glass of *halo-halo* normally costs P15-30.

Not recommended for: those who love *halo-halo* too much that they eat the product themselves.

2. Set up a barbecue stand. Barbecues are all-time favorites wherever there is charcoal. Also a favorite during beach cookouts and picnics, you can never go wrong by selling barbecue. You could even have customers who order by the bulk.

What you will need: barbecue sticks and a nice cheap grill will do. Of course, you will also need meat, soy sauce, Sprite, black pepper, brown sugar, calamansi, *vetsin*, garlic, laurel and rock salt.

How much you can charge: P5-10 depending on how much meat you skewer on the stick.

Not recommended for: those who have delicate/sensitive skin. Sticking those pork meats and gizzards can be very harsh on your skin. You also risk getting pricked by the stick once in a while.

ILLUSTRATION: ANTHONY MISTADES

3. Offer to wash your neighbors' cars. You will never run out of customers in this one. Befriend your neighbors. Tell them that you offer manual car washing services and if you are good, then you might just have a reason to spend more time with your neighbor's pretty daughter.

What you will need: water, a pail, a hose, powdered soap and chamois.

How much you can charge: some would be willing to pay P100-150 for an amateur car wash.

Not recommended for: those who do not like the idea of getting down and dirty with an automobile.

4. Rent out your PlayStation2, X-Box, Game Cube. Instead of hogging your computer console (*eh ikaw lang naman mag-isa naglalaro eh*!) why not rent it out to the kids in your neighborhood? Not only will you be earning money, but you will also get the feeling of satisfaction, which will come from the fact that in your own way, you have contributed to the children's happiness. At the same time, you're keeping them off the streets and into the safety of your own home. You could even sell them some ice candy.

What you will need: one unit of Playstation2/X-Box/Game Cube, a television and nice, comfortable bean bags.

How much you can charge: P35-40 per hour.

Not recommended for: those who easily get irritated by kids (or even teens!) who would constantly shout "Hado-ken!" or "Ka-boom! Boom!" while playing.

5. Sell some ice candy or ice water. Summer means sporting season. Your customers will be those who do nothing but play basketball games as if there's no tomorrow. You can put up a sign on your garage door "ice candy/ice water for sale." Or, if you are the aggressive type and want a more direct approach, hang around basketball courts with your merchandise and wait until the players have exhausted themselves too much that they would be willing to pay double the price for just a plastic of ice water.

What you will need: water and plastic. For ice candy, powdered fruit juices, freezer.

How much you can charge: Nowadays, you can sell one ice water for P2 and ice candy for P2-3.

Not recommended for: those who have bad hygiene. Do not engage in this business because you might spread germs in your neighborhood.

6. Sell fresh fruit shakes and hotdog sandwiches. You enjoyed these delicacies during the school year. And now that it's vacation time, you crave for the taste of these cheap but tasty *merienda* treats. You're not alone.

What you will need: fruits (mango-P40/kg, pineapple-P25/pc, melon-P30/pc) footlong hotdog-P100/kg, footlong hotdog bun-P16/6-pc pack.

How much you can charge: fruit shakes can be sold at P10-20 while footlong sandwiches can be sold at P20-P30.

Not recommended for: those—again—who can't resist gobbling up the products.

7. Accept typing jobs. This is for the skillful typist. If you can type 150 words per minute with 97% accuracy, then this should be a piece of cake for you. (By the way, I accept typing jobs… hehehe!)

What you will need: a nice computer with MS Word.

How much you can charge: P20-P40 per page.

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

Not recommended for: those who still type using only their index fingers.

8. Accept printing jobs. Of course, after doing the typing job, you could also offer to print out the documents.

What you will need: a working printer that does not blotch

How much you can charge: P5-P10 per page

Not recommended for: those who do not have the patience to deal with printers that malfunction just when they are needed the most.

9. Offer photography services. Yes, you can make money from your photography hobby. As long as the photos you take are clear and always centered, trust me, there are people who are willing to pay P2,000 for a whole day coverage (non-professional) of their children's birthdays.

What you will need: a manual camera is more efficient during any coverage but a digital camera can also come in handy sometimes.

How much you can charge: P1,500-P2,000

Not recommended for: those who do not have the patience to stay in one place and take pictures for a whole day

10. Rent out your billiard table. If you're blessed enough to have your very own pool table and it's strategically placed in your garage, then you have the option of renting it out to the people in your neighborhood.

What you will need: a pool table.

How much you can charge: P7-P10 per game is a reasonable price

Not recommended for: pool table owners who have neighbors who do not respect other people's properties.

11. Hold a garage sale. Your room is filled with junk you don't need. Why not sell them? Prices could vary but don't sell them at a very high price unless of course it's an antique that you really want to get rid of.

Make sure that you clean up any item that you wish to sell and make sure that it is in working condition.

What you will need: sort out all the things you want to sell and make a checklist.

How much you can charge: depends on the item.

Not recommended for: those who do not like the idea of waiting all day for prospective buyers.

E-mail the author at dxmatilla@yahoo.com.

Surviving your first trip abroad

By Samantha Ang
2bU! Correspondent

WHEN my friends and I went on a study tour to Beijing three summers ago, we had a blast. Imagine being in a foreign land, with friends and no parents for a whole month or so… My first taste of independence! Yum.

But it was also scary. As first-timers, we didn't know what to do and what to expect. So, for the newbies out there, here are some valuable tips to help you survive your stay abroad. Just keep the following in mind and rest assured, you'll be A-OK.

- You can never pack too early.

Prepare a list of everything you think you will need—from scissors and detergents to playing cards and medicine. You'll never know when you might need them. But leave space in your baggage for the things you buy abroad. Prioritize. Then, double-check. No, make that triple. Check as many times as you want. You don't want to be asking your parents upon arrival in your destination to send your glasses through the fastest delivery service available.

- **Make friends, not enemies.**

It would be great if you're with a friend or two, but don't despair if you're alone. Get to know people. Make new friends. Make tons of friends, including with the locals. You'll be sure to encounter a wide variety of people on your trip so give them a chance before you make any judgments. Some of the people my friends and I were initially wary of during our tour ended up to be really good friends. The moral lesson is: "Never judge a book by its cover."

- **Stick to the rules.**

Maybe a little bit of rule-bending wouldn't hurt, just don't test the limits. Remember, you're basically in unfamiliar territories and things don't work exactly the same as they do here. You wouldn't want to be sent home a little too soon, would you? When it's lights out, it's lights out. You don't have to sleep if you don't feel like it but don't go sneaking around outside until dawn. Or, if the urge to explore your new environment is too great (I know how it feels), make sure someone is with you or you know where you're heading. It's always better to be safe than sorry.

- **Learn.**

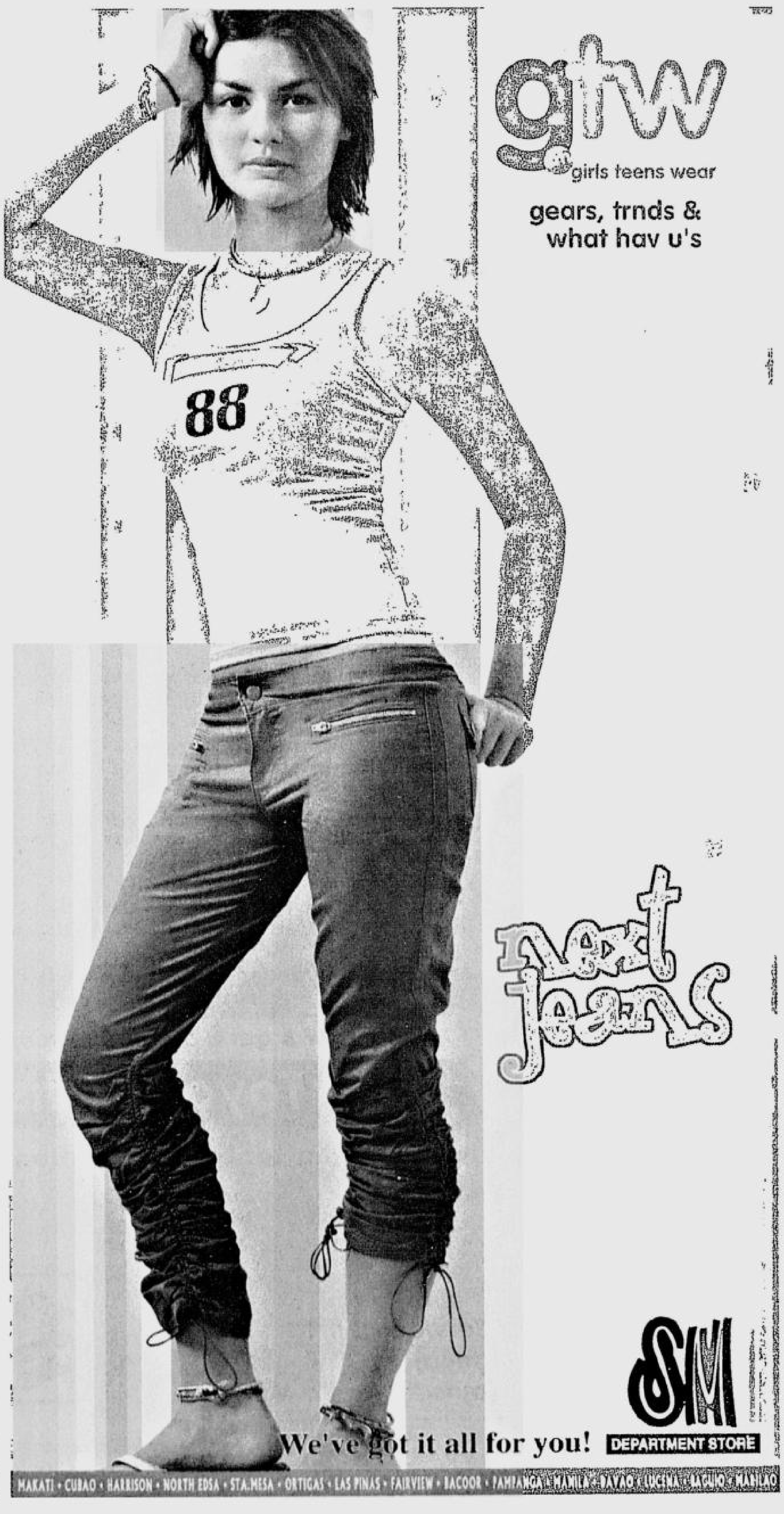
What's the point of going on a study tour if you don't learn something from it? Immerse yourself in foreign culture. Take the classes seriously. If there's a test the next day, really study for it. Besides, all play and no work is simply no fun. Learning outside the regular classroom could also be quite an experience so be sure to get as much of it, too.

- **Capture the moment.**

If you have a camera, go ahead and click away. Don't hesitate to take spur-of-the-moment snapshots. Developing fees might be high, but hey, those memories captured on film are simply priceless. Have a journal? Write on it every so often. There's nothing like putting down certain memorable experiences in your own words. Time really flies so fast that, before you know it, it's back to reality once again. But don't sweat it. Relax, enjoy, and live for the moment.

Bon voyage!

ILLUSTRATION: ANTHONY MISTADES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2BU! SURVEY

What's the best way to cool off this summer?

Text and photos by Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

ALWAYS bring a fan because you don't know when you're gonna need one.—Dee-Jay Carriaga

DRINK lotsa water.—Lindley, 20, feels and looks fresh thanks to lotsa water

LOTSA baths.—Eila-Irene BS, 17, takes lotsa baths

KEEP hydrated.—Paul, 20

EAT ice cream.—Anna Patricia, 14, obviously loves ice cream

IF sticky shirts, scalp-scratching and sweat-surfaced skin are a staple in your life right now, it only means one obvious thing—summer is here.

Although zooming to Antarctica is undeniably impossible for most of us, there are other ways to beat the heat this season, and here are just a few suggestions from some cool dudes and dudettes.

Go ice skating. It's fun and it's really cold there.—**Toffee Suria, 23,** who shares how his girlfriend has been cold to him recently

Bring a spritz bottle of water that you can use to freshen up your face when you're hot.—**Leng, 22,** who just got back from Australia

Matulog ka nang hubad.—**Alvin Reario, 19,** does this

Put ice in front of your electric fan.—**Dondie Nidua, 15,** sells ice in his neighborhood

Go swimming, *pero 'pag wala lang sun.*—**Rodel, 19,** who likes swimming but hates the sun, obviously

Don't go out of your air-conditioned room.—**Patrick V., 17,** one of the lucky ones to have an air-conditioned room this summer

Palamig ka sa mall.—**Pebbles Sanodio, 19,** SM mallmouse

Stay inside the house because it's really, really hot outside.—**Meanne Isidro, 15,** supposedly allergic to the sun

Mag-stock on very cold cans of soda, juice or whatever.—**Marj, 22,** is starting to stock up on *dalandan* soda

Go to the mall when it opens *tapos uwi ka na lang 'pag gabi na.* Trust me, you won't feel like it's summer.—**Bon Macuja, 16,** used to practice this last summer

When I feel hot, *kinukuha ko yung malamig na pitsel ng tubig sa* ref *tapos dinadait ko sa balat ko.*—**Tess, 22,** won't reveal her real name so the whole family will continue to love their pitchers

Wear comfy clothes and instantly change into fresh ones whenever you sweat.—**Laisa,** shopaholic

Go to Boracay!—**Reg Sauz, 21,** can't wait

Stay under the shade. Don't get too much sun or else you'll burn.—**Olivia,** will buy a new pair of shades when she gets her paycheck

Mag-choco peanut ice cream! —**Michal T. Lim, 15,** who can finish a gallon of choco peanut ice cream in one day, though not in one sitting

Keep your cool.—**Niqui B., 18,** one cool dudette, according to her best friend Lhay

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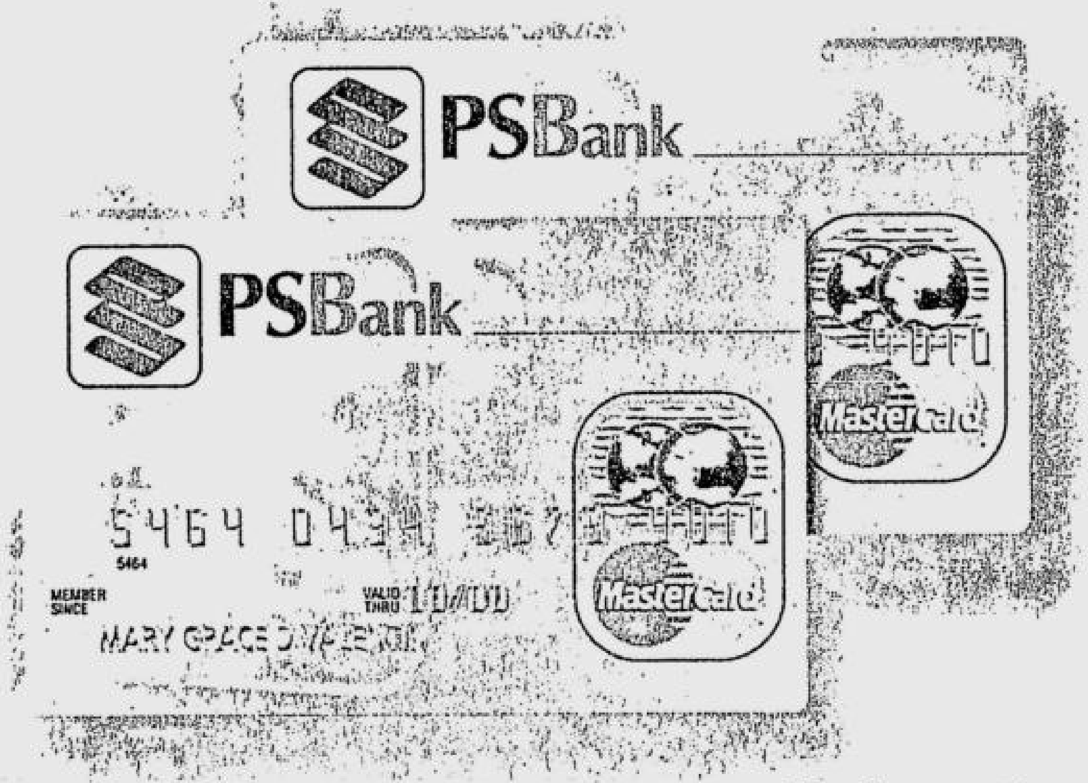

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Music and fun under enchanted skies

IN celebration of its ninth year as the Philippines' first and only world-class theme park, Enchanted Kingdom presents a series of exciting evenings under enchanted skies.

Beginning April 24 (and running weekends till May 2), enjoy al fresco movies in the park with "Movies Under the Stars." Showing at the Spaceport area will be wholesome family-oriented films like "Finding Nemo," "Big," "Lizzie McGuire" and "Richie Rich."

The night of the 24th culminates in an awesome display of fireworks at "The 9th Enchanted Kingdom Annual Fireworks Competition." The pyrotechnics display will pit the creativity and technological savvy of nine fireworks masters from around the country. The first placer will officially represent the Philippines in the Macau International Fireworks Festival next year.

On April 25, Cinderella will presents its "Totally Tropical Summer Collection" at the Bandstand, featuring summer's must-have apparel and accessories for men, women and children. In the evening, music rules with South Border's "Rainbow Concert" at the Midway Boardwalk.

Located at Sta. Rosa, Laguna, Enchanted Kingdom has been synonymous to good fun, not only because of its 22 rides and accompanying attractions, but also because of its warm and wholesome atmosphere, perfect for family bonding moments and cherished memories.

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A wild, 'un-grown-up' afternoon with 'Peter Pan' teen stars

APPROPRIATELY dashing and adventurous for the role, says The New York Times

By Ruben V. Nepales
LA Correspondent

LOS ANGELES—Jeremy Sumpter, who is Peter Pan in the new film version of the literature classic, really seems the boy who does not want to grow up.

Fourteen at the time of this interview, he enters a hotel room and shoves Rachel Hurd-Wood, who plays Wendy, onto a chair.

Later in this afternoon interview, he leans and wipes his face with the tablecloth.

He raises his shirt to show a scar near his bellybutton.

He makes faces while Rachel tries to recite her favorite actors. So, to shush him, Rachel covers his mouth with her hands. When she's done saying "Johnny Depp, Orlando Bloom, Will Smith and Jim Carrey," she wipes the resulting drool from Jeremy's mouth on his black shirt.

She: "That was disgusting."

A WILD/ F3

Jeremy Sumpter, the first real boy to play J. S. Barrie's eternal boy, is hyper and mischievous, but wants to do 'Romeo and Juliet' next

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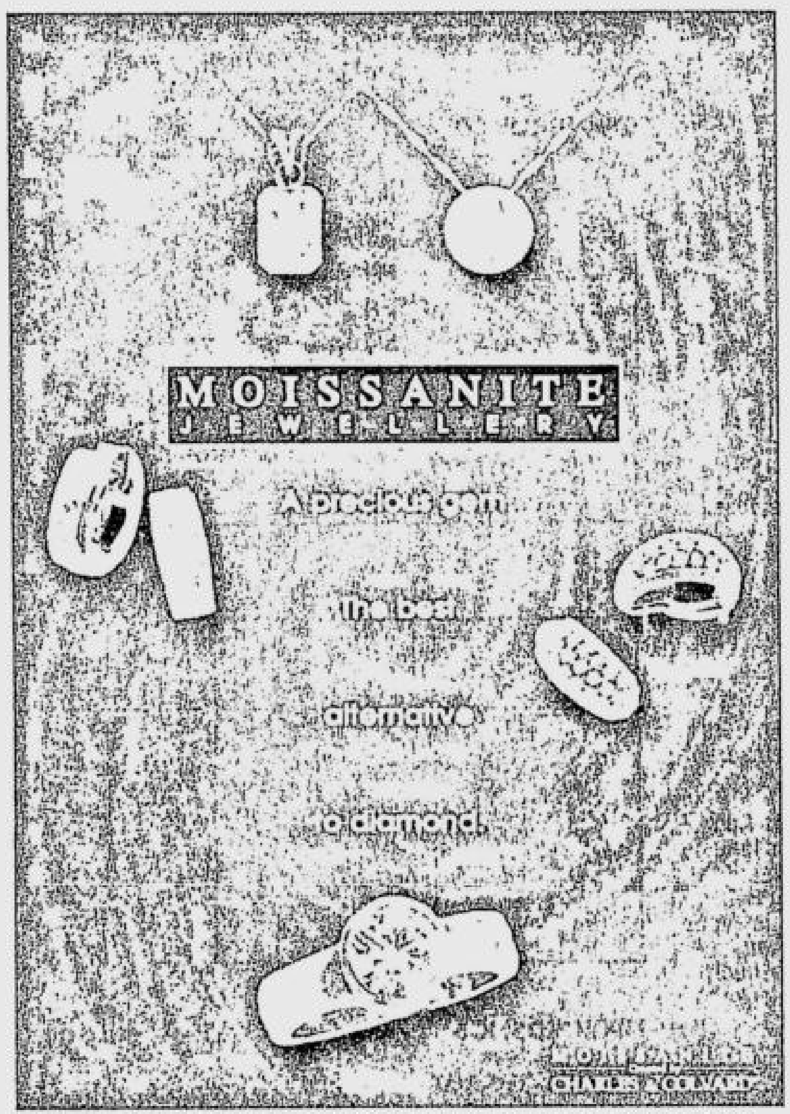
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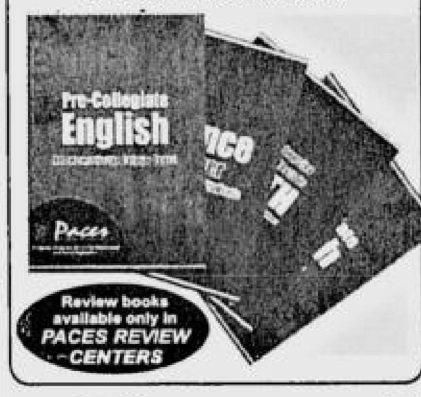
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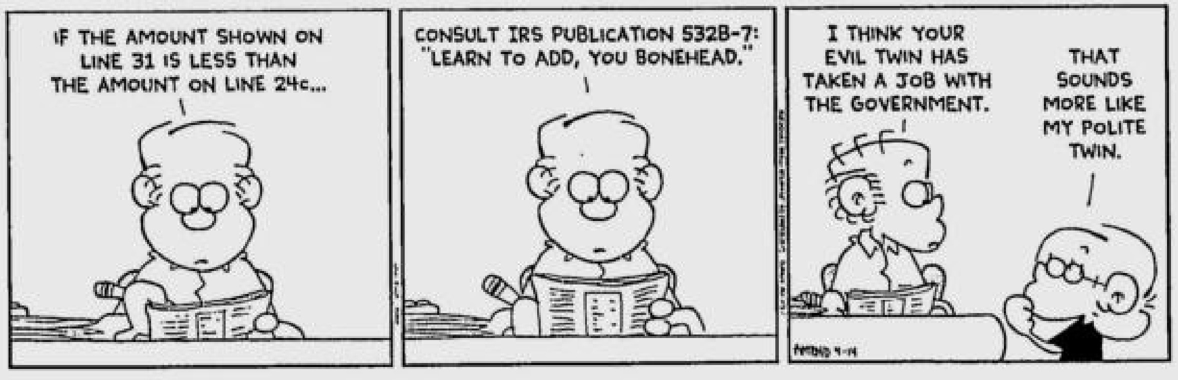
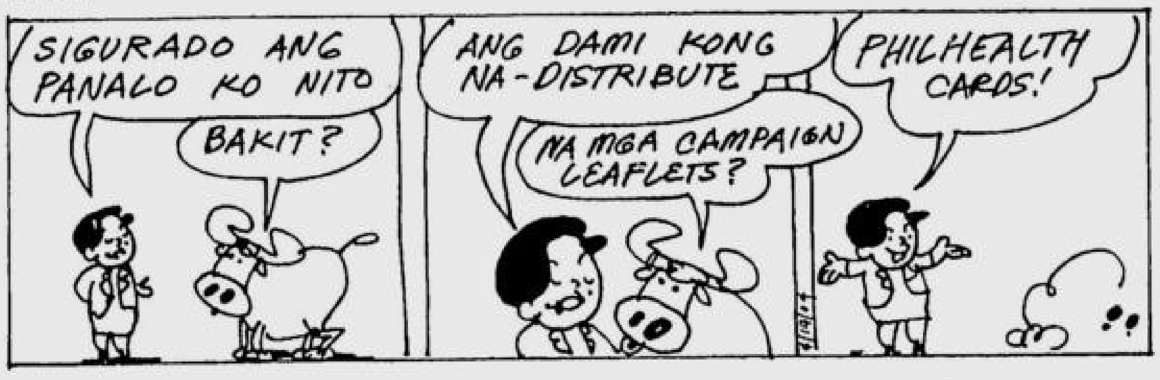
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


IF THE AMOUNT SHOWN ON LINE 31 IS LESS THAN THE AMOUNT ON LINE 24c...
CONSULT IRS PUBLICATION 532B-7: "LEARN TO ADD, YOU BONEHEAD."
I THINK YOUR EVIL TWIN HAS TAKEN A JOB WITH THE GOVERNMENT.
THAT SOUNDS MORE LIKE MY POLITE TWIN.
FOXTROT 4-14

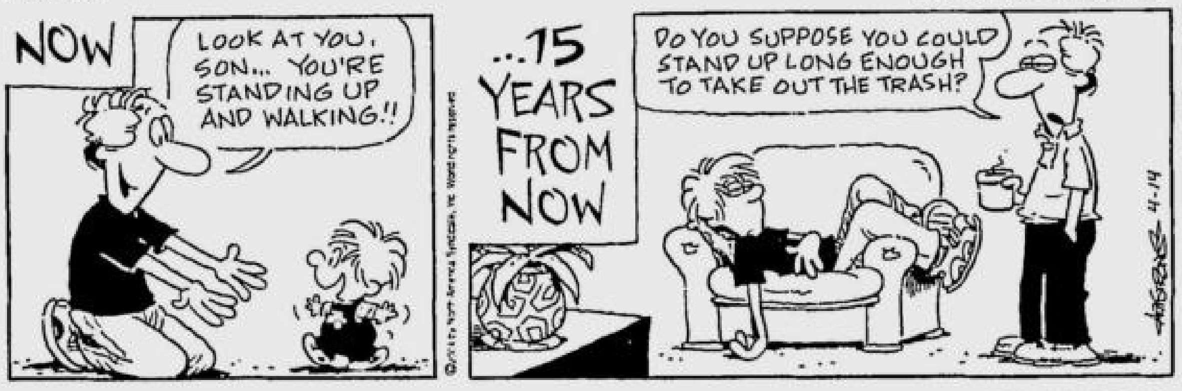
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


SIGURADO ANG PANALO KO NITO
BAKIT?
ANG DAMI KONG NA-DISTRIBUTE
NA MGA CAMPAIGN LEAFLETS?
PHILHEALTH CARDS!

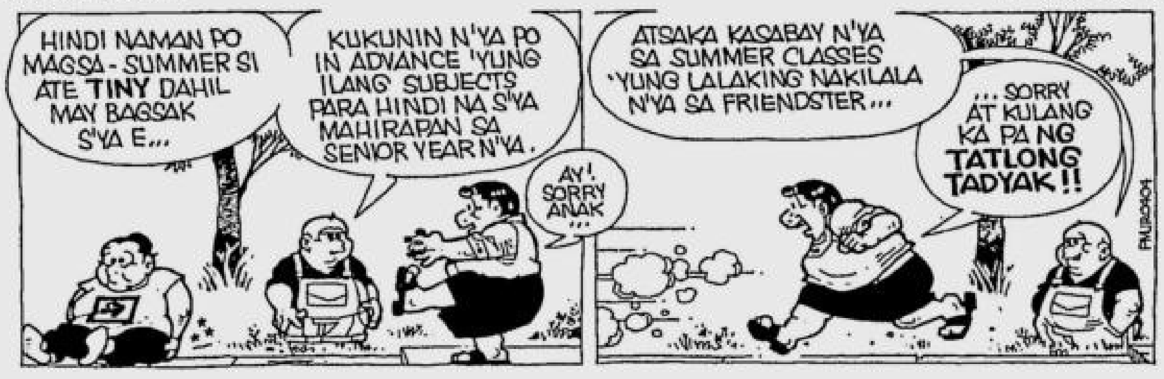
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


NOW
LOOK AT YOU, SON... YOU'RE STANDING UP AND WALKING!!
...15 YEARS FROM NOW
DO YOU SUPPOSE YOU COULD STAND UP LONG ENOUGH TO TAKE OUT THE TRASH?
4-14

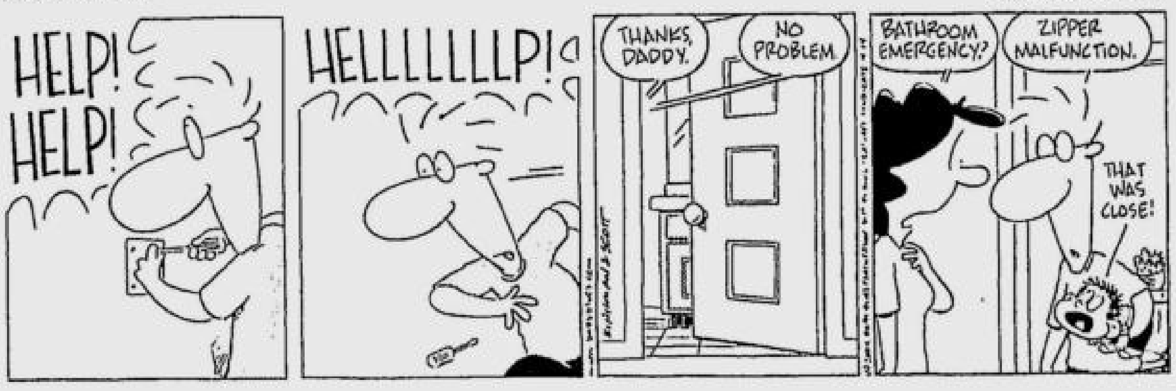
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


HINDI NAMAN PO MAGSA-SUMMER SI ATE TINY DAHIL MAY BAGSAK S'YA E...
KUKUNIN N'YA PO IN ADVANCE 'YUNG ILANG SUBJECTS PARA HINDI NA S'YA MAHIRAPAN SA SENIOR YEAR N'YA.
AY! SORRY ANAK...
ATSAKA KASABAY N'YA SA SUMMER CLASSES 'YUNG LALAKING NAKILALA N'YA SA FRIENDSTER...
... SORRY AT KULANG KA PA NG TATLONG TADYAK!!

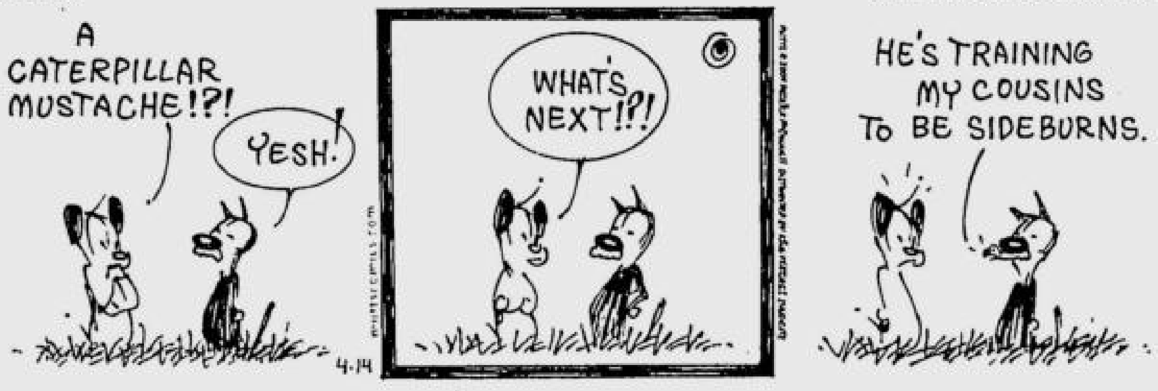
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


HELP! HELP!
HELLLLLLLP!
THANKS, DADDY.
NO PROBLEM.
BATHROOM EMERGENCY?
ZIPPER MALFUNCTION.
THAT WAS CLOSE!

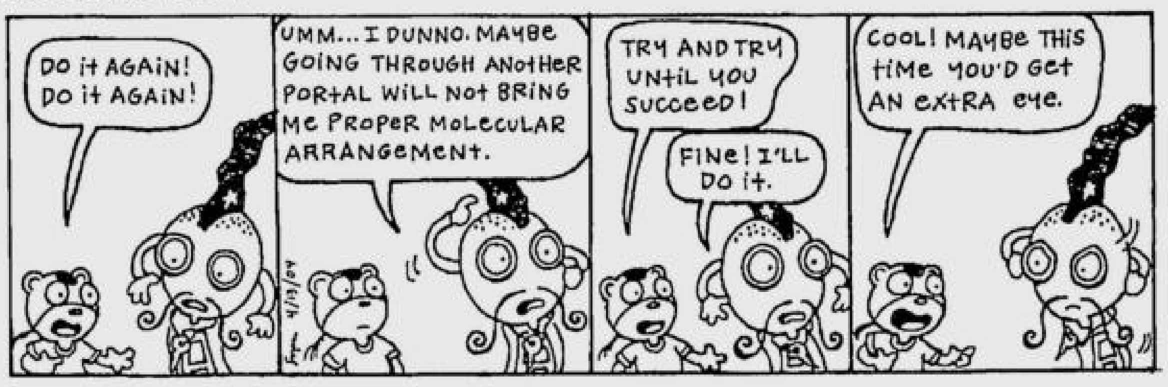
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


A CATERPILLAR MUSTACHE!?!
YESH!
WHAT'S NEXT!?!
HE'S TRAINING MY COUSINS TO BE SIDEBURNS.
4-14

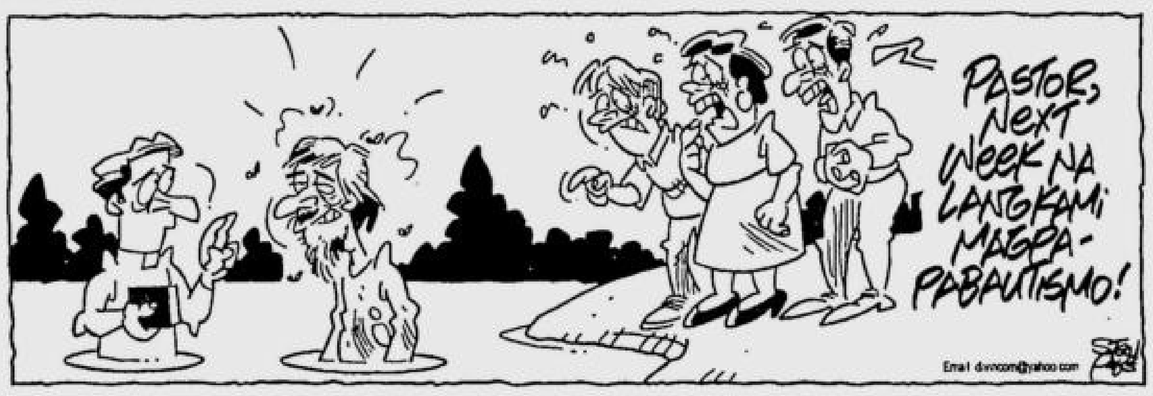
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


DO IT AGAIN! DO IT AGAIN!
UMM... I DUNNO. MAYBE GOING THROUGH ANOTHER PORTAL WILL NOT BRING ME PROPER MOLECULAR ARRANGEMENT.
TRY AND TRY UNTIL YOU SUCCEED!
FINE! I'LL DO IT.
COOL! MAYBE THIS TIME YOU'D GET AN EXTRA EYE.

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


PASTOR, NEXT WEEK NA LANG KAMI MAGPA-PABAUTISMO!
Email divncom@yahoo.com

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY You have a strong, powerful personality. You are very much aware of what is going on around you. You want to find your place in society. You're strongly connected to family. The respect of others is important to you. You value tradition and continuity. Expect a social year ahead. New relationships are favored! **Birthdate of:** Sarah Michelle Gellar, actress; Robert Carlyle, actor; Loretta Lynn, singer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19) This is a wonderful day to enjoy good times with siblings, neighbors and relatives. You feel big hearted, happy and ready for a laugh.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) You're in the mood to spend money today! Be careful that you don't go overboard. Normally, you're sensible with your cash; however, today, you could meet with temptation.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) You're tempted to bite off more than you can chew in practically everything that you do today. Avoid overeating, overspending and talking too much.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) Because you can connect with the soft, tender side of yourself today, you feel more tender to others as well. (That is why pain and suffering create compassion in all of us.)

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22) Boisterous times with friends and groups are fun today. Get out and enjoy yourself with others. (Don't let anyone talk you into spending too much money. You know how you like to pick up the tab.)

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22) When making promises to bosses, clients or anyone, be conservative today. Give yourself some leeway. You might be too optimistic about setting deadlines.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22) You're thinking really big today. You're more conscious of what others believe and do, even if it is in another country. You want to grow as an individual.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21) Don't bet the farm today. You could go overboard sharing something with someone. Generosity is a good thing, but don't be foolish. (Trust everyone, and always lock your door.)

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21) Ever the optimist, you like to think the best of others. Be careful about joint ventures today. Don't promise more than you can deliver.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19) You feel like you can conquer the world today; maybe you can. You're positive energy can certainly achieve something now. Look around you.

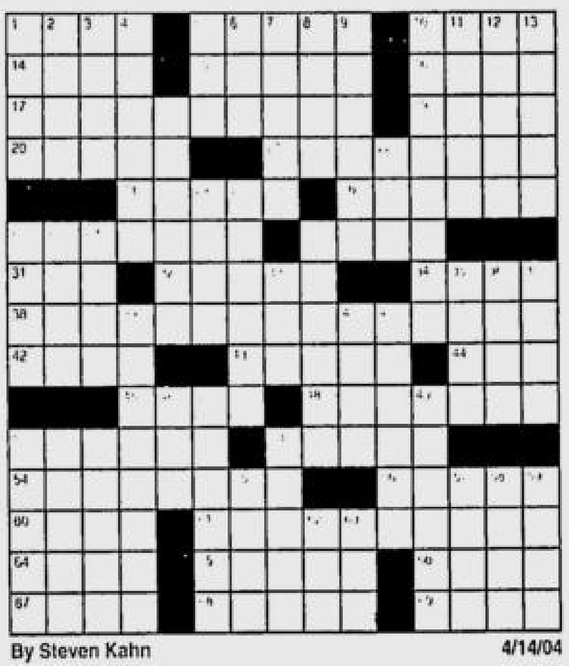
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18) You might feel sexually attracted to someone. Your romantic vibes are definitely glowing. It's OK to flirt a little, but don't believe everything you hear.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20) This is a wonderful day to entertain at home. You can do this in a big way or a little way. Invite friends, family members and neighbors over. Joy in the home promotes happiness and health.

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Campus quarters
5 Corporate symbols
10 Self-satisfied
14 Square measure
15 Used a broom
16 Actress Turner
17 Lovable gonzo journalist Thompson?
19 Bone: pref.
20 Way from the heart
21 Confederate cry?
23 Muse of poets
26 Class members
27 Salad green
30 Norway capital
31 Kaline and Jolson
32 Mergansers
34 Iodine source
38 Raspy-voiced tattletale?
42 Vega's constellation
43 Al Capp's Lena
44 Zodiac sign
45 Keen on
48 Look-alikes
50 Heretofore
53 Cable channel
54 Dull savage?
56 Indian corn
60 Ended
61 Place to shop au naturel?
64 Lottolike game
65 Goddess of peace
66 Shakespearean king
67 Break sharply
68 Inventor Nikola
69 Harvard rival

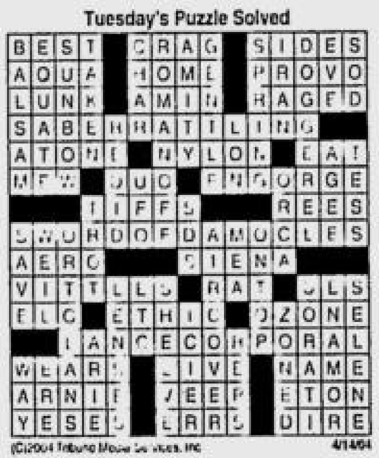
DOWN
1 Early word from baby
2 Black-and-white treat
3 Bring up
4 Weasel's cousin
5 Baton Rouge sch
6 Part of BYOB
7 Square one
8 Switchboard pers.
9 Shoulder bands
10 Dawdler
11 Pastoral people of Kenya
12 Prior to
13 Some Highlanders
18 Badger
22 Brynner of "The King and I"
24 Summit
25 "Tommy" band
27 Satirist Mort
28 Maneuver
29 Danube feeder
30 Basketry willows
33 With what motive?
35 _ _ Stanley Gardner
36 Lounge lizard's look
37 Paid players
39 Drizzle unit
40 Clip
41 Type of hat
46 San Francisco hill
47 Small-time
49 Twisted
50 Furry "Star Wars" critters
51 Torn asunder
52 "Maria _ _"
53 Saturn's daughter
55 Like red meat?
57 Home decor company
58 Passion
59 To be in Toulon
62 Photo blowup
63 _ _ culpa



By Steven Kahn
Redmond, WA

4/14/04

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved



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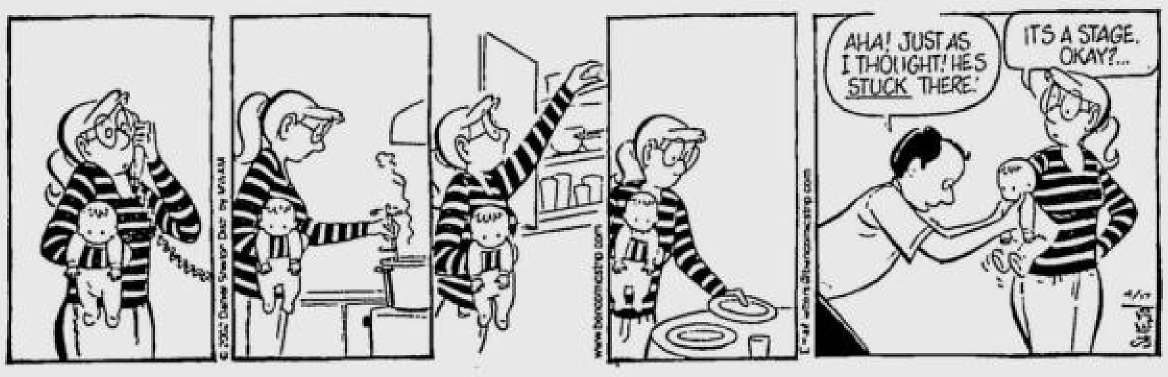
4/14/04

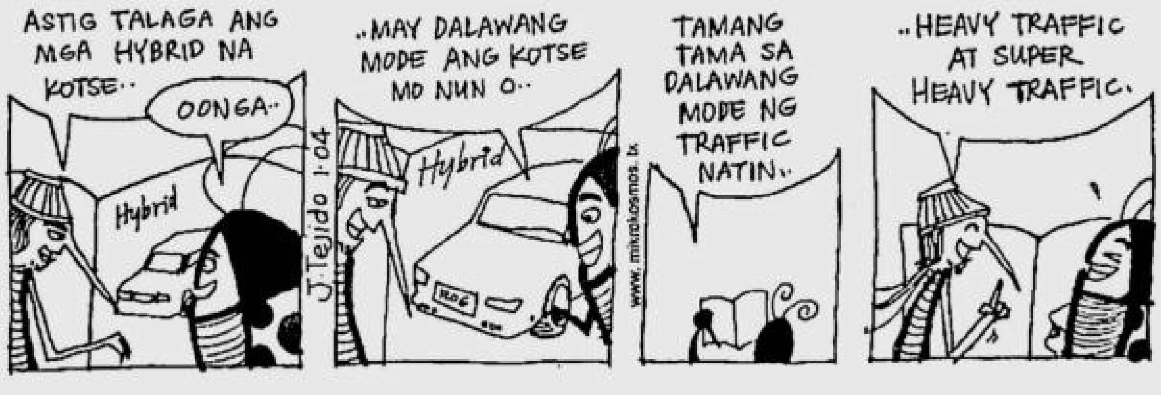
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


AHA! JUST AS I THOUGHT! HE'S STUCK THERE.
IT'S A STAGE. OKAY?...
www.bencomicstrip.com

MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


ASTIG TALAGA ANG MGA HYBRID NA KOTSE..
OONGA..
Hybrid
..MAY DALAWANG MODE ANG KOTSE MO NUN O..
Hybrid
J.Tejido 1.04
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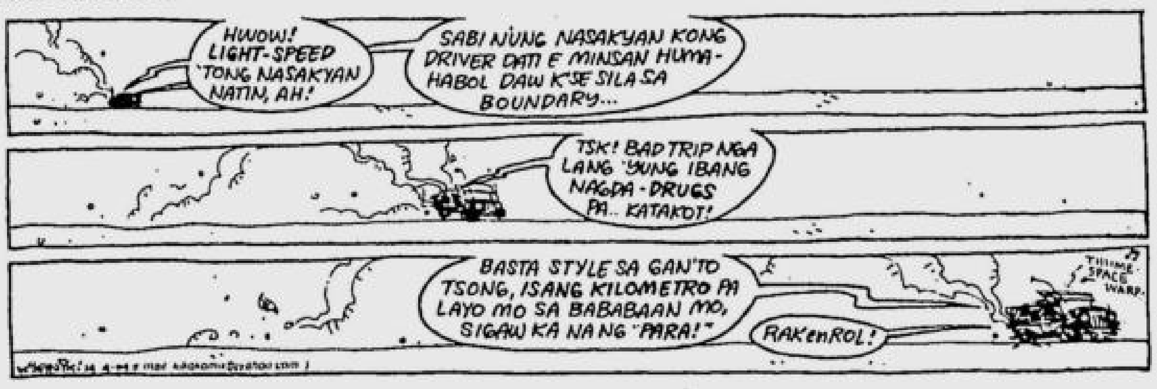
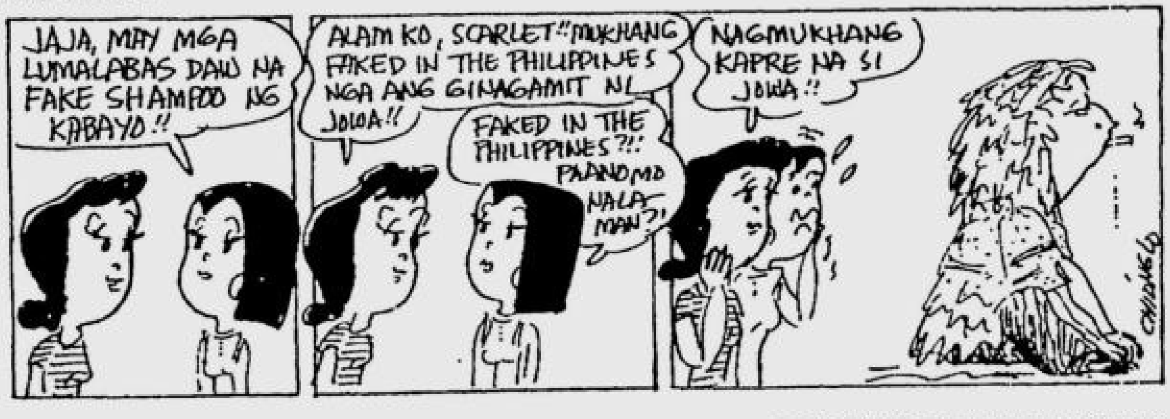
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


HWOW! LIGHT-SPEED 'TONG NASAKYAN NATIN, AH!
SABI NUNG NASAKYAN KONG DRIVER DATI E MINSAN HUMAHABOL DAW K'SE SILA SA BOUNDARY...
TSK! BAD TRIP NGA LANG 'YUNG IBANG NAGDA-DRUGS PA.. KATAKOT!
BASTA STYLE SA GAN'TO TSONG, ISANG KILOMETRO PA LAYO MO SA BABABAAN MO, SIGAW KA NA NG "PARA!"
RAKenROL!
THIIING... SPACE WARP.

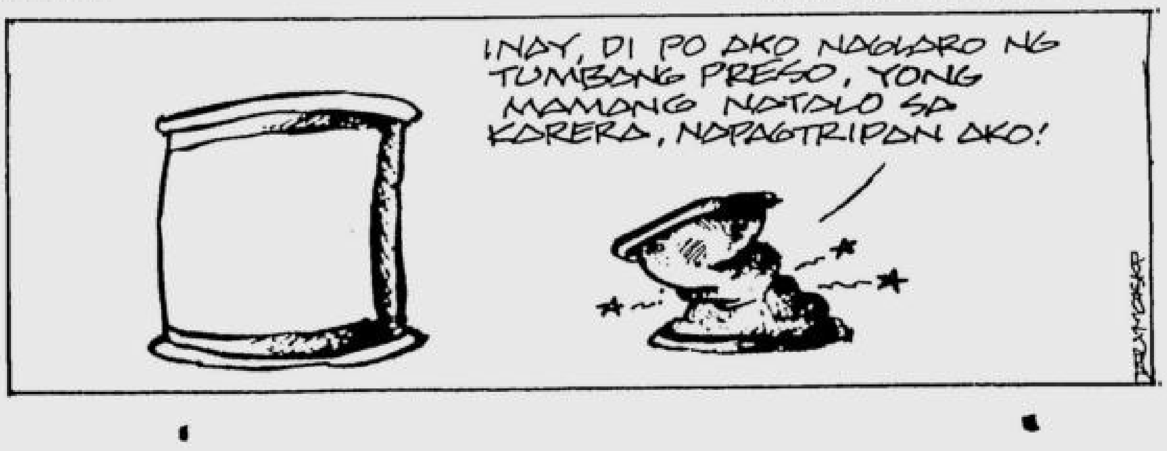
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


JAJA, MAY MGA LUMALABAS DAW NA FAKE SHAMPOO NG KABAYO!!
ALAM KO, SCARLET!! MUKHANG FAKED IN THE PHILIPPINES NGA ANG GINAGAMIT NI JOWA!!
FAKED IN THE PHILIPPINES?!! PAANO MO NALAMAN?!
NAGMUKHANG KAPRE NA SI JOWA!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


INAY, DI PO AKO NAGLARO NG TUMBANG PRESO, YONG MAMANG NATALO SA KARERA, NAPAGTRIPAN AKO!

A wild, 'un-grown-up' afternoon with 'Peter Pan' teen stars

From page F1

He: "Sorry, Rachel. You deserved it."

Midway through the interview, he bangs his head, forehead first, on the table. There is a loud thud. The writers gasp.

It turns out to be one of Jeremy's tricks. His head did not really hit the table. At the moment that Jeremy's forehead was close to bumping the table surface, his hand slapped the table from underneath to create that thudding sound.

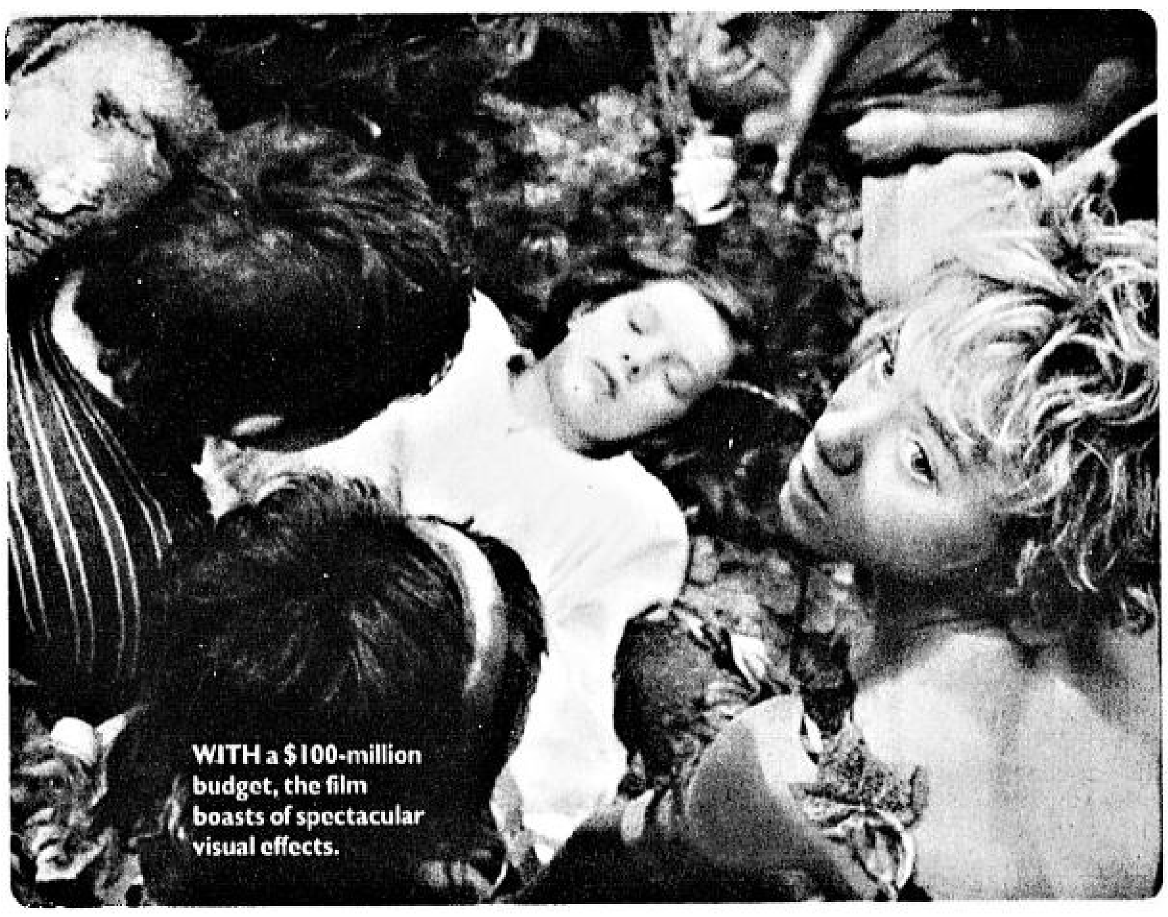
Such horseplay from the hyper Jeremy shakes the blahs from journalists.

One can only imagine the challenges that P.J. Hogan faced when he directed Jeremy, Rachel and scores of children (and a sheepdog playing a... nanny) on soundstages in Australia for "Peter Pan," the first live-action adaptation in which Peter Pan is played by an actual boy (Jeremy).

Hogan had a budget of more than $100 million to create spectacular visuals and sets for Peter Pan, Wendy, Captain Hook and the rest of the cast to cavort in —from Edwardian London to Neverland and Hook's pirate ship.

The American Jeremy, and Rachel, who is English, were chosen for the plum roles after months of talent search that spanned three continents.

Apparently, the intensive casting search and Hogan's patience paid off.



WITH a $100-million budget, the film boasts of spectacular visual effects.

BRITISH actress Rachel Hurd-Wood marks her acting debut as Wendy.

Dashing and adventurous

The New York Times' A.O. Scott wrote of "Peter Pan": "While Peter (Jeremy Sumpter) is appropriately dashing and adventurous, Hook (Jason Isaacs) wonderfully villainous and Tinker Bell (Ludivine Sagnier) as cute and naughty as anyone could wish, the movie belongs to Rachel Hurd-Wood's Wendy Darling. Ms Hurd-Wood, a 13-year-old British actress making her professional debut, was born for the role, which calls on her to be a precocious child, an action heroine, the surrogate mother of a tribe of Lost Boys, and the romantic lead. Her soft, sensitive features display both Wendy's childlike eagerness and her incipient wisdom without overdoing either trait, and she and Mr. Sumpter remind us that Peter Pan, beyond all the swashbuckling and fantasy, is a love story, which ends on a poignant Jamesian note of renunciation."

Jason Isaacs also raves about his two young costars. "Jeremy is very good at whatever he sets his heart on. He thinks he's ready for the Olympics. The same is true when it comes to flying. He'd forget sometimes that he could fly only if there are four big strong burly men holding on to the ropes. Jeremy would dive off the side of a building, run up the wall and you see these guys sprinting across the stage to grab hold of the end of the rope before Jeremy goes splat on the floor.

"Next door where we were shooting, there was a theme park. Whenever there was a break, Jeremy and I would jump out in full costume and we'd climb over the fence to get on the roller coaster. Some of the people would be running around the whole place looking for us."

Of Rachel, Isaacs says: "She's luminous inside and out. In her first scenes, she was tremendously impressive." He quips, "It was completely irritating that someone can walk in and be not only charming to everyone but with no training at all, eclipse me. And I've been here for 20 years. The fact that she was so nice was the only thing that stopped me from wanting to kill her."

Jeremy is tall for such a young boy. He grew fast during filming that they had to change Wendy's bedroom window several times so he could fly through it without bumping his curly-haired head.

Awkward

Rachel, on the other hand, is in that awkward stage between childhood and adolescence but delicately beautiful, nonetheless. She's wearing a red hooded sweatshirt with "roxy" printed in front, a brown miniskirt and sheepskin ugh boots.

Here are excerpts of our freewheeling (in the loosest sense of that term) interview with Jeremy and Rachel:

Jeremy: Surfing is the best thing. When you're surfing, you feel free. That's how it's similar to flying. When you're having a bad day, you want to go surfing because it puts a smile on your face.

You have bad days?

J: My sisters give me bad days.

Rachel: That's not very nice to say.

J: They are very bad girls.

R: No, they're not. I would love to do more films. But Jeremy and I are on cue about what I'm going to be when I grow up. I will be a —one, two, three...

J and R in unison: Marine biologist!

J: Jason Isaacs is really supportive on the set. He helps you out.

R: But he's scared of dogs, ghosts—he's scared of everything, even the wind. He had to make friends with Rebel (the St. Bernard that plays Nanny in the film). He would go, "Good boy, good boy, Rebel." Then Rebel would jump and Jason would go, "Oh my God" (in a trembling voice).

What was the coolest thing during this filming?

R: Getting to work with Jeremy.

J: And my favorite experience was not working with Rachel. On the days that Rachel was off the set I went, yes, bring it on! No, it was enjoyable working with Rachel, but the most fun I've had on the set was flying. With Rachel!

Were there accidents on the set?

J: I got stabbed by the sword a lot. I got stabbed on the stomach. I have a scar to prove it. It's right by my belly button. (He raises his shirt to expose his tummy.)

Favorite actress?

J: I like Ludivine Sagnier (Tinker Bell). She is a total knockout. Have you seen "Swimming Pool?" (This is Ludivine's R-rated film that was a hit at last year's Cannes Film Festival.)

Reporter: Yes.

J: Can you tell me about it? Because I'm not allowed to see it. I want to know every detail.

Favorite actor?

J: My favorite actor is Mel Gibson. Hee-hee (in a high-pitched voice).

R: Careful, Jeremy.

J: He's such an interesting guy to watch. He's never been in a movie where he's boring. And Jim Carrey. He's the funniest guy on earth.

What are you going to do with your earnings from the movie?

R: Spend it on booze. No, I'm kidding.

J: I want to buy a huge sandwich at Subway. I'm putting it in my savings account.

Next movie?

J: I want to do "Romeo and Juliet" with Rachel.

How was your costume?

J: It was itchy at first but once you get used to it, it was the coolest costume in the world. We were in harness every day. It was the coolest thing to be airborne for a long period of time. I loved it.

R: It was pretty painful, though.

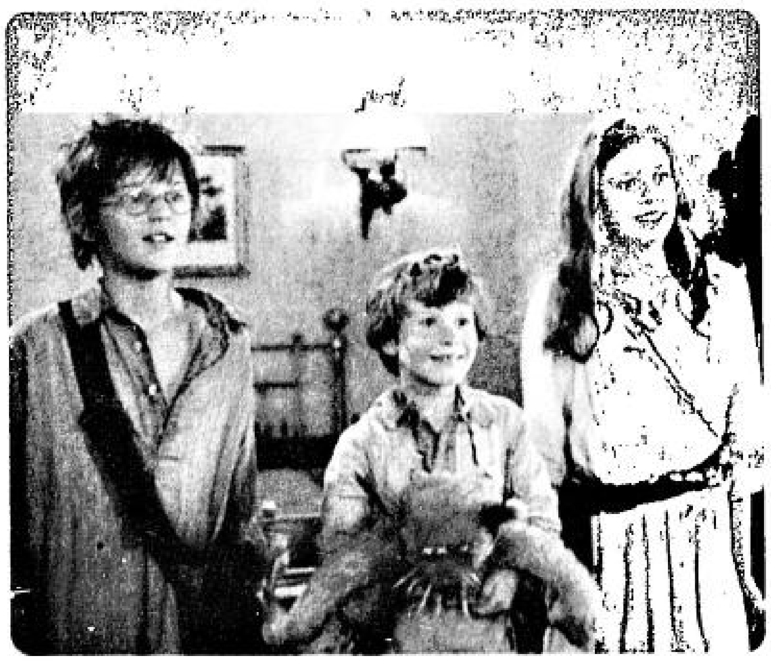
You were trained to fly in a circus.

J: The circus has these trampolines and your feet literally go up on the ceiling. And you can do a double back turn while midair. It was awesome. It was my favorite thing in Australia other than Rachel.

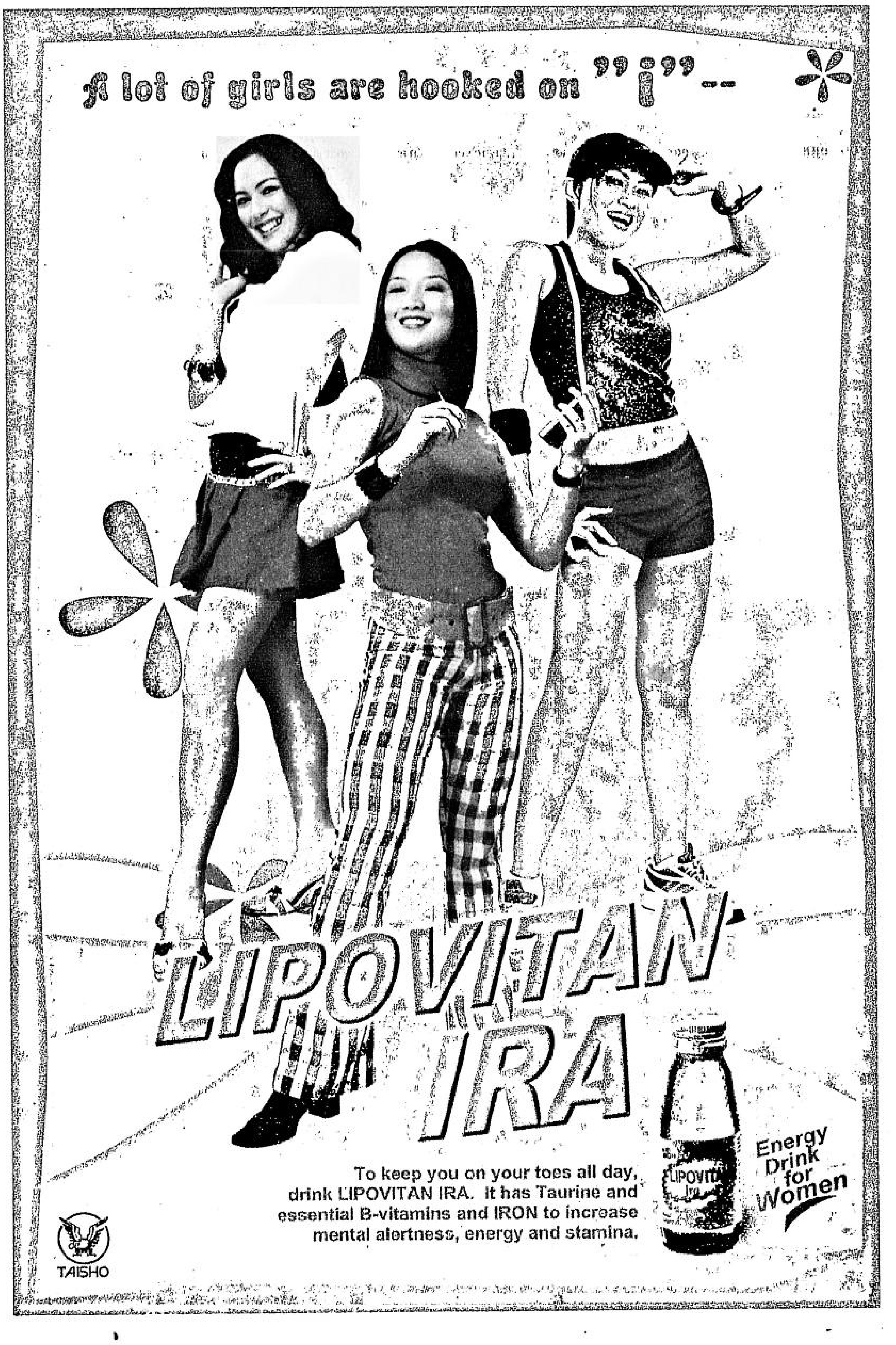
R: Was I really your favorite thing in Australia?

J: Yes, Rachel, you were.

FLYING was their favorite thing to do on the set.



HARRY Newell (John) and Freddie Popplewell (Michael) join the cast as Wendy's brothers.



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Pinoy grappler's cup runneth over

By Linus Velasco Tiu
2bU! Correspondent

FINALLY, somebody responded to a growing demand.

In March, guys from Grappler Zone, Strike and Shoot gym organized the first submission wrestling tournament in the Philippines, "Grappler's Cup 2004" at the University of Santo Tomas gymnasium.

Rules permitted virtually all kinds of throws, takedowns, joint locks (except small-joint manipulation) and chokes.

Dojos and teams from all over the country sent their best bone-crushing representatives. But the Cup was not a venue for head-butting machismo. Although competition was fierce, there was a lot of showmanship and class.

After all, the tourney was organized to showcase all the grappling styles together and develop the sport, says Ronald Gavileño, the tournament's commissioner.

Half-lightweight Hurt Down (65.9 kg)

Speed and precision were displayed as the little guys showed everyone that grappling ain't reserved for the big and muscle-bound.

Deftac jujitsu purple-belt Pichon Garcia made short work of his opponents as he applied sneaky armlocks and chokes, easily going up the lightweight ladder. The division trophy was not to be his, however, as he was stopped by Submission Sports' Erwin Tagle in the championship round.

Tagle's superior endurance and agile maneuvers gave him the edge over Garcia. Their match, clearly one of the highpoints of the tournament, went the distance, using up the entire 20 minutes.

The match opened with lighting-fast exchanges as Garcia attempted several submissions that Tagle avoided and countered with relentless takedowns.

At one point, Tagle did a cartwheel to pass Garcia's defenses. His relentless attacks got him the half-lightweight title (with a score of 24-4) and the Best Competitor of the Year award.

Lightweight Licking (66– 76.9 kg)

Rolly Diño, 51, of the Young Men's Christian Association Baguio Judo proved he was not too old to compete, choking his younger opponents to get to the finals. His fighting style earned him the playful tag "*tatang*" jujitsu from the cheering crowd.

The fourth degree black-belt and one time bronze medallist in the Southeast Asian (SEA) Games was stopped in his tracks by 22-year-old blue belt Allan Marcus Co of Deftac

Jujitsu in the championships. Co, a two-time URCC winner and University Athletic Association of the Philippines judo player, showed everyone his talent for turning every ground position into an opportunity for submission.

In a neck and neck fight, Co eventually secured an armlock from the ground, which had Diño tapping out. Aside from the lightweight division title, Co also got the special award for Best Submission.

But Diño became the first inductee to the Grappler's Cup hall of fame.

Middleweight Mayhem (77–87.9 kg)

The man to beat in this division was John Baylon, the country's living judo legend. In his late 30s, he has collected medals from competitions the world over.

Underdog blue-belt Raffy Garcia of Deftac Jujitsu took on the formidable Baylon. Both switched from position to position on the ground trying to outmaneuver each other but, in the end, Garcia prevailed, 5-2.

The championship match was not so thrilling as it was between teammates Fritz Rodriquez and Garcia. They played out a mock match, smirking in between moves. The contest ended with a coin toss, which Rodriquez won.

Heavyweight Ho Slapping (88+ kg)

Proving he is the country's heavyweight wrecking ball on legs, Philippine team wrestler and Deftac Jujitsu blue-belt Marcus Valda bulldozed through his division with great ease.

The "hapless" victim of the SEA Games double gold medallist's "rampage" was Rage gym's Ravinder Sogi, who was picked up like a rag doll, held aloft for a few seconds and dropped hard like a bad habit.

Apart from the division title, Valda got the Best Takedown Award.

Open-weight Reprisal (whatever kg)

Philippine team judo player Gilbert Ramirez avenged his loss to Co in the lightweight wars by besting three of the latter's teammates.

Ramirez's power and submission techniques earned him the open-weight title.

A good mark

The Grappler's Cup 2004, the first submission wrestling tournament in the country, saw the dominance of team Deftac, which displayed smooth technique and good knowledge of the game.

But the rest of the competitors found it a very educational experience that will come in handy as Gavileño plans to make the Cup an annual event.

Brazilian referee Andre "Batata" de Moraes, a *capoeira* instructor and jujitsu purple-belt, sees great potential for the sport in the country. "The players are very good considering Jujitsu just started here, whereas in Brazil it has been around for about 50 years," he says.

YOU don't want to mess with these wrestling champs.

The first submission wrestling tournament in the Philippines was held in March

Writing workshop for children

TOWER Book House is conducting a writing workshop for Filipino children aged 8-18 during summer.

Interested participants may call 8154938 or 8156925; or go to Windsor Tower, 163 Legazpi Street, Legazpi Village, Makati City. The workshop includes techniques in discovering and strengthening individual style. Also covered are essay writing, feature writing, journalism, short story writing and playwriting.

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Gandalfs, Merlins and Harry Potters of Manila

By Catherine Young
2bU! Correspondent

A group of Filipino wizards is showing that magic is here to stay

MAGIC is as old as humanity. In ancient Egypt, a conjurer called Dedi amazed audiences when he decapitated two birds and an ox and then restored their heads. Medieval magicians used coins, dice and playing cards to surprise and delight people.

Giuseppe Pinetti of Italy was the most famous magician in the 18th century; his repertoire included second sight and automatons, or machines that operated by themselves. John Henry Anderson of England was known as the Wizard of the North for his elaborate performances.

Jean Houdin of France revolutionized magic by treating the craft scientifically; he was the first to use electricity in his tricks. Years later, Hungarian-born American Ehrich Weiss would take his professional name from Houdin; he became Harry Houdini.

Art form

Magic then may have been performed to distract bored pharaohs and to extort money from gullible peasants; but it is clearly not the case now.

As the members of the Inner Magic Club (IMC) will tell you, it is a true art form.

The IMC has members from all walks of life, bound together by their love for magic. One of the group's founding members is singer Rannie Raymundo.

As a child who traveled a lot with his family, Raymundo purchased magic books. Later, he tapped the Internet to get information about magic. Much later, a chance meeting betweem him and a group of magicians having coffee in a mall led to the establishment of the IMC.

Magical immersion

I met the IMC magicians while they were rehearsing for a birthday party. As I entered the room, I nearly tripped on the stilts of a colorfully dressed performer who was having dinner.

A mime befriended me and started making things disappear. One after the other, magicians started coming to the table to show off their skills. Coins started disappearing and multiplying. Cards were shuffled and chosen and predicted. Even gum started to transfigure from chewed to unchewed to wrapped with a flick of the wrist.

Cris Castro, house magician of the Edsa Shangri-La Hotel Garden Café, made a coin appear in a person's hand. Lou Hilario, a top illusionist, opened his wallet in a burst of fire.

Mayi Alejandrino, a motorcycle businessman and one of the club's new members, said he had learned that practice makes perfect. He had also learned never to do the same trick twice.

Another magician, who goes by the stage name "Leodini," explained the basic tricks and principles of the trade.

There are three types of magic: stage, close-up and parlor. Close-up magic is the type that David Blaine was initially famous for; you perform tricks with the audience members right in front of you.

Stage magic is performance at a distance; Las Vegas magicians are known for it. And parlor magic is a cross between the two.

Leo also explained misdirection: In making the audience choose a card, you give the illusion that it was his choice and his alone.

Palming is also a common trick. Simple card tricks involve making a chosen card "rise" from the middle to the top of the deck; but, in actuality, the card had been at the top all along.

Renegade Joker

Before the meeting, Raymundo told me to bring my own deck of cards "so you know that the cards were not tampered with."

After making me pick a card at random—the Joker ("a delicious card"), as it turned out—he made me sign it with a permanent marker. Placing it back in the deck, he tried to produce my card and failed twice.

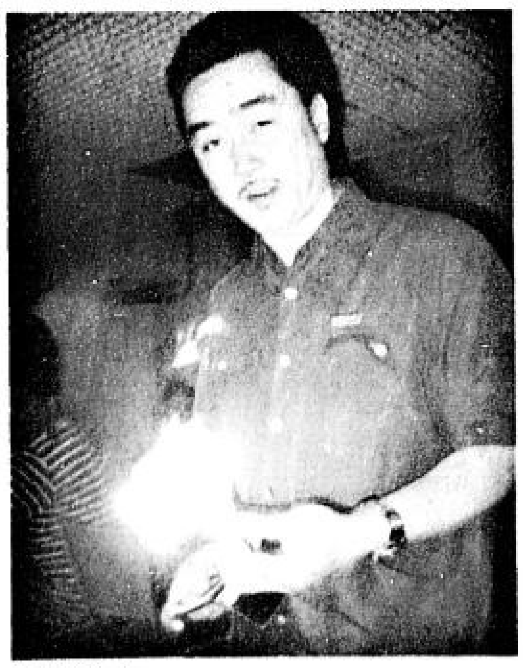
I was starting to get embarrassed when he said that since he could not find the rogue card, he would try to get it by taste. He then proceeded to lick all of the cards. Biting one card out of the deck, he proceeded to hand it to me by his teeth. Still, the card was wrong.

Then out of nowhere, he spat out a folded-

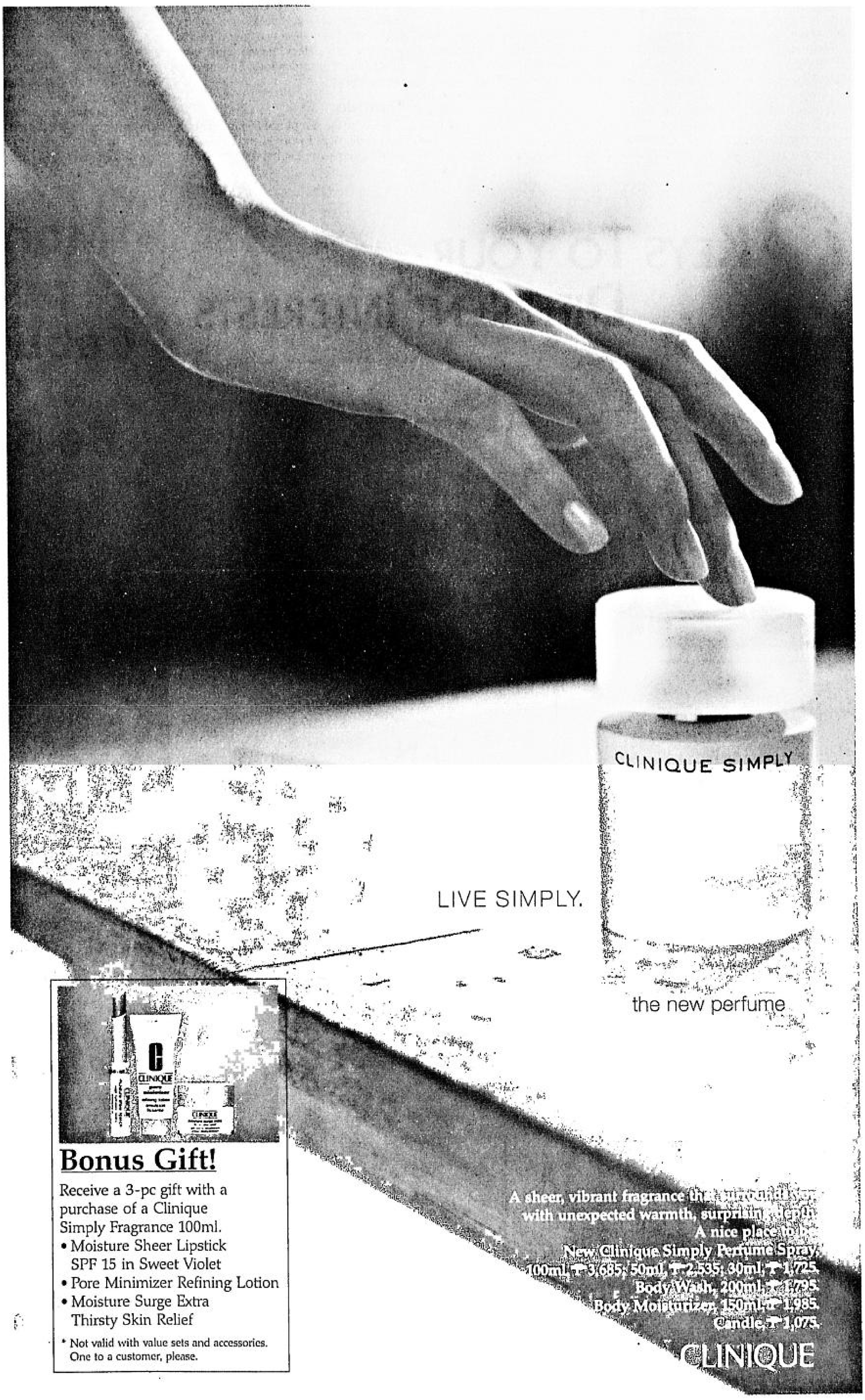
GANDALFS/ G3

NOVICE Mayi Alejandrino

PHOTOS: PONG IGNACIO



LOU Hilario



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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1592, Series of 2004.

Suddenly, it's (street) magic!

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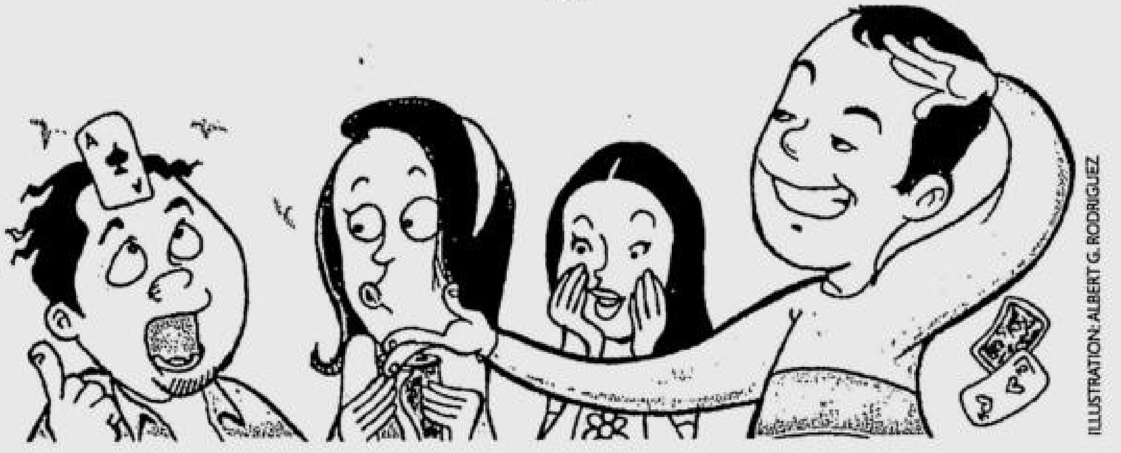
ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT G. RODRIGUEZ

By Javier Mata
2bU! Correspondent

SOME time ago I watched the David Blaine Specials for the first time. For those who don't know him, David Blaine is a magician who has been making waves recently (his TV specials are occasionally aired on AXN).

He is responsible for making magic cool once again. Forget all the previous magic routines you've seen before with cheesy titles like "The Great Magnifico and his lovely assistant (insert sexy female name here)" and old rehashed tricks like cutting someone in half and the already old-hat rabbit-out-of-a-hat.

David Blaine practices street magic.

What is that? It's a different kind of magic—grittier, edgier and in-your-face. No stage, no assistant, no fancy costume, minimal props (most of the magic can be done with a regular deck of playing cards) and it can be done anywhere, even on the street (hence the title).

The old magic tricks can, at best, solicit an applause and a smile. Street magic, however, leaves you swearing in bewilderment as you helplessly try to figure out the magician he did it. It is the future of the art of performing magic.

Needless to say, I was pretty awestruck watching Blaine shock complete strangers as he walked up to them and did a trick or two. I decided right then and there that I was going to learn street magic.

The skills

The first thing I needed to learn was the proper handling of the deck of cards, the most essential weapon in a street magician's arsenal. I learned half a dozen ways to shuffle a deck and another half-dozen flourishes (that's magician lingo for stunts to make the performers look cool) like the "domino" effect you see casino handlers perform, or being able to cut a deck in one hand.

I also needed to learn how to "force" a card to go exactly where I wanted it to go. It took sometime to practice this, considering that I was never dexterous or coordinated to begin with, but now I can confidently say the "deck" is now my friend and I can already astound people with my cards. Heck, I even know now how to cheat in card games. Anyone care to take me on?

The tricks

Now for the fun part. I began learning the magic tricks I would need to become a street magician. Let me tell you, learning the secrets of a naturally secretive group of people brought a smirk to my face. Learning to know what they know gave me a feeling of, well, power.

I began to practice some of the most amazing tricks shown on the Blaine specials, among them being able to get specific cards to "jump" to the top of the deck, to my hand or even to the spectator's hand, being able to correctly guess a spectator's card, getting objects to disappear/appear then appear/disappear somewhere else, and even the infamous self-levitation (No, I am not talking about the one where you simply tiptoe on one foot. I'm talking about real levitation, a closely guarded secret among magicians).

Many of the tricks I learned were pure genius, particularly the "heal-and seal" trick. Here, a crushed Coke can is uncrushed, sealed once more and then is magically refilled with soda. All in front of your eyes!

The fine-tuning

The last thing I was taught was how to do the performance itself. I learned how to act, since I would essentially be acting in front of people. I grilled myself on what to do and what not to do in a performance, how to make a trick convincing, how to misdirect people's attention, what to say and what not to say.

I was even taught what to do when caught in the act (which happened quite often to me in the beginning—and still does).

Finally, after a little more practice, I was ready to crash-test myself upon friends and see if I could make it (and who knows, maybe pick up comments, criticisms and suggestions along the way, too).

The performance

After getting over my nervousness, I

SUDDENLY/ G3

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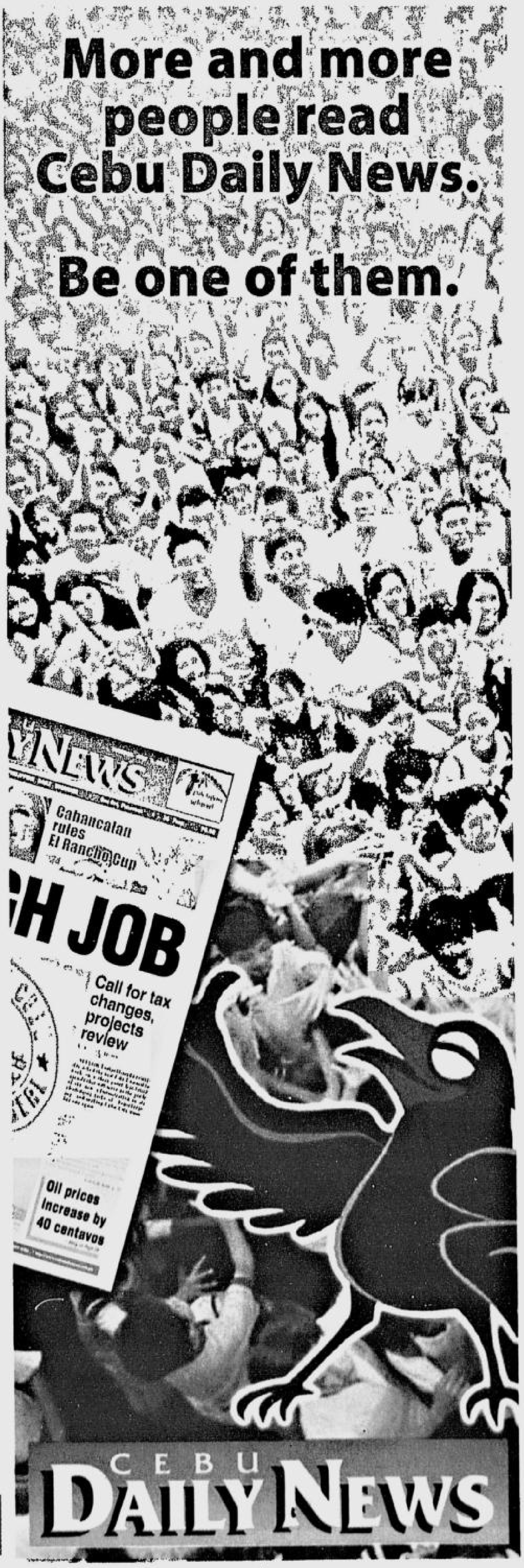
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CEBU DAILY NEWS

Gandalfs, Merlins and Harry Potters of Manila

From page G1

THE AUTHOR and Leodini

up card that was the renegade Joker.

Magic auction

In a relatively quiet videoke room of a grill place on Quezon Avenue, members of the IMC would gather every Wednesday to perform and to learn from fellow members.

But there is also something of an entrepreneurial spirit that permeates the meetings; magicians sometimes auction off their old, and sometimes never-been-used, equipment.

Apart from the standard auction going-once-going-twice spiel, the auctioneer would sometimes demonstrate the tricks as well.

Some members continue eating their food, others would try to outbid one another. Some who know the principles of the magic kits would shout whether the product is worth buying.

RANNIE Raymundo

Although the persisting magician usually spends a good amount of his earnings honing his craft, money does not come easy. The struggling ones end up getting paid a few thousand pesos, unlike magicians abroad who can live like a celebrity from their earnings.

The more famous ones, such as Hilario and Raymundo, are paid higher. The seasoned ones will always tell you to have a second job.

Spouses and girlfriends are the magicians' first audience. They are there when their elated guys, working in the wee hours of the morning, would cry after perfecting a trick. They are there during performances, rooting for the most trivial magic tricks.

GANDALFS/ G4

Suddenly, it's (street) magic!

From page G2

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The first time is always worth remembering. I started with my "ambitious" card routine, basically a set of card tricks that should be done one after the other for maximum effect. One card goes in the middle of the deck, then "jumps" to the top, to my pocket, to your pocket, all done with a magician's flair.

I easily wowed my friends with some tricks and got some really good reactions ("*Paano mo ginawa yun?!*," "*Astig!*" "Amazing!" and even "Creepy!").

Of course, it wasn't all smooth sailing, as I was a beginner. I flubbed several tricks and got caught red-handed a few times. Lucky for me, my friends were very supportive and gave me useful comments to improve my performance. I did several more performances for other people after that, and I can safely say I'm improving bit by bit. Throughout it all, I'm having the most fun I had in a while.

Becoming one of us

So, are you interested in becoming a street magician? All it takes is a little practice, lots of determination and cold hard cash.

The magician's circle is an extremely secretive (can't really blame them) group. They're not going to give out secrets for cheap. The beginner's course alone cost me close to P8,000.

If you think it's worth it (and I believe it is) go to www.ellusionist.com. The website is one of the best online stores for budding magicians. Practically every magic-learning material is there, and many of them can't even be found locally.

Yes, this is an expensive hobby, and sometimes I find it hard to justify the cost. All I have to do, however, is see the reactions on people's faces as I amaze them with even the simplest of magic tricks, and I get even more excited.

This may never go farther than a hobby, but it will be a hobby I will be keeping for some time. Watch out, David Blaine, here I come!

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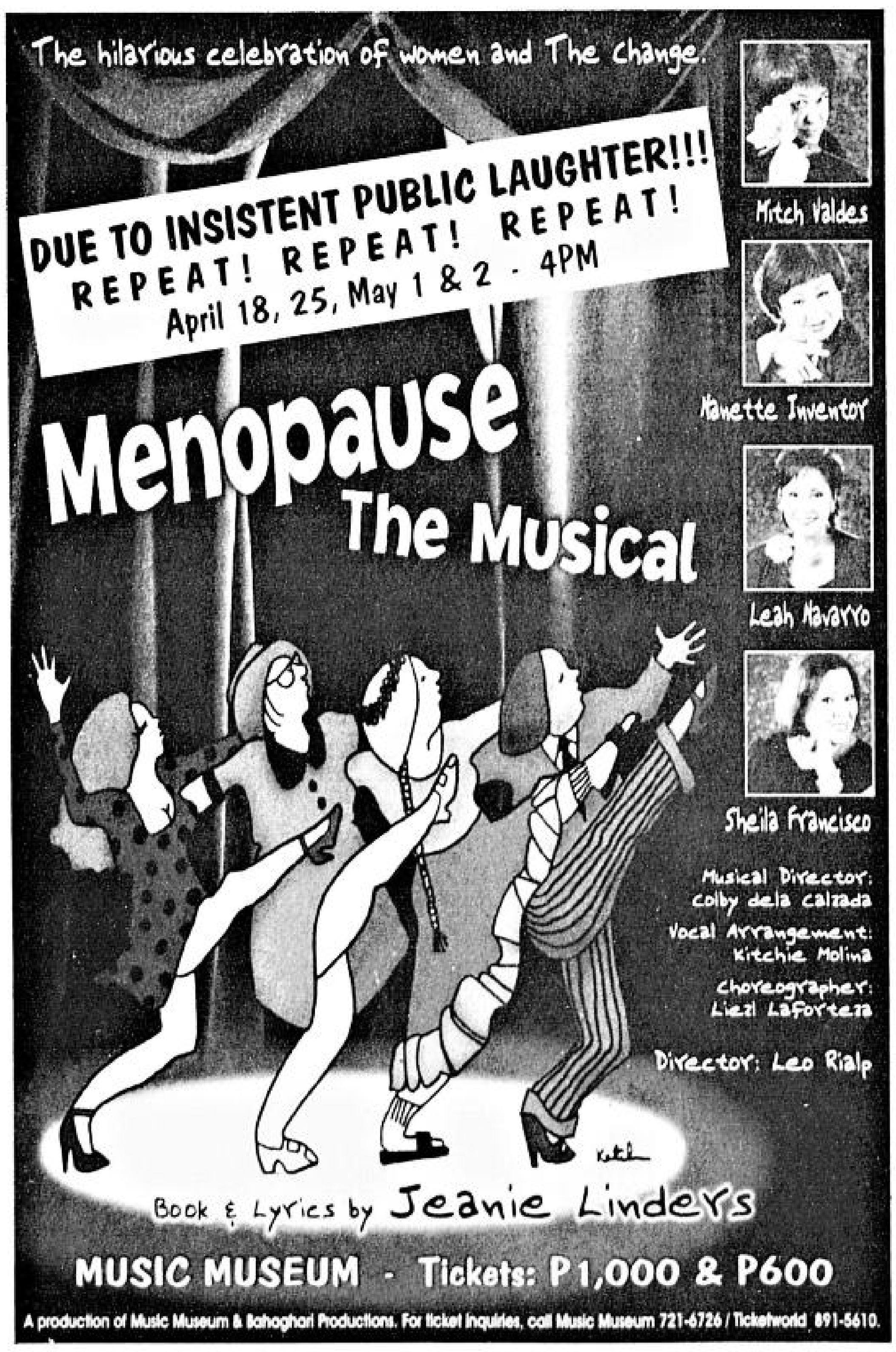
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Gandalfs, Merlins and Harry Potters of Manila

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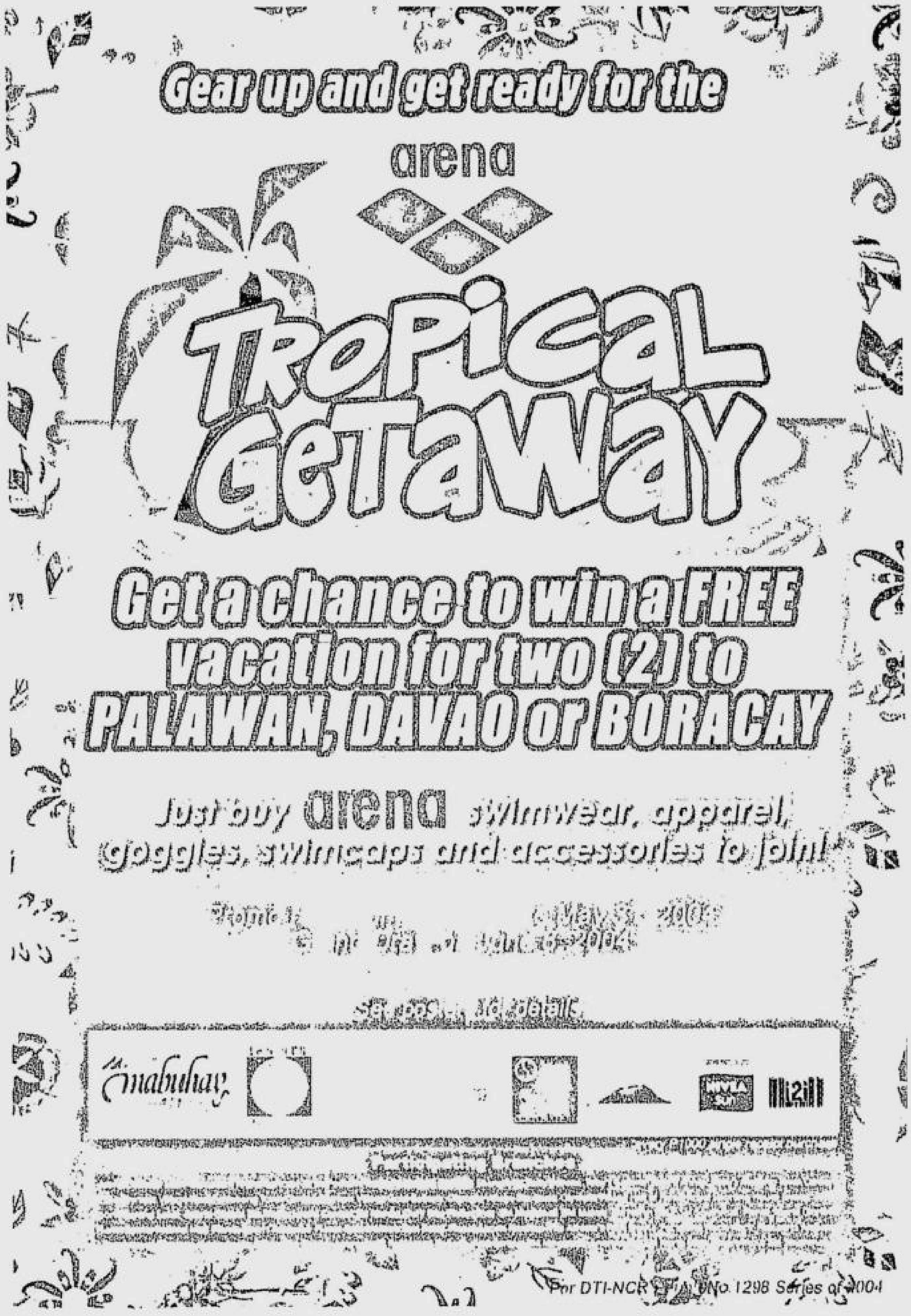
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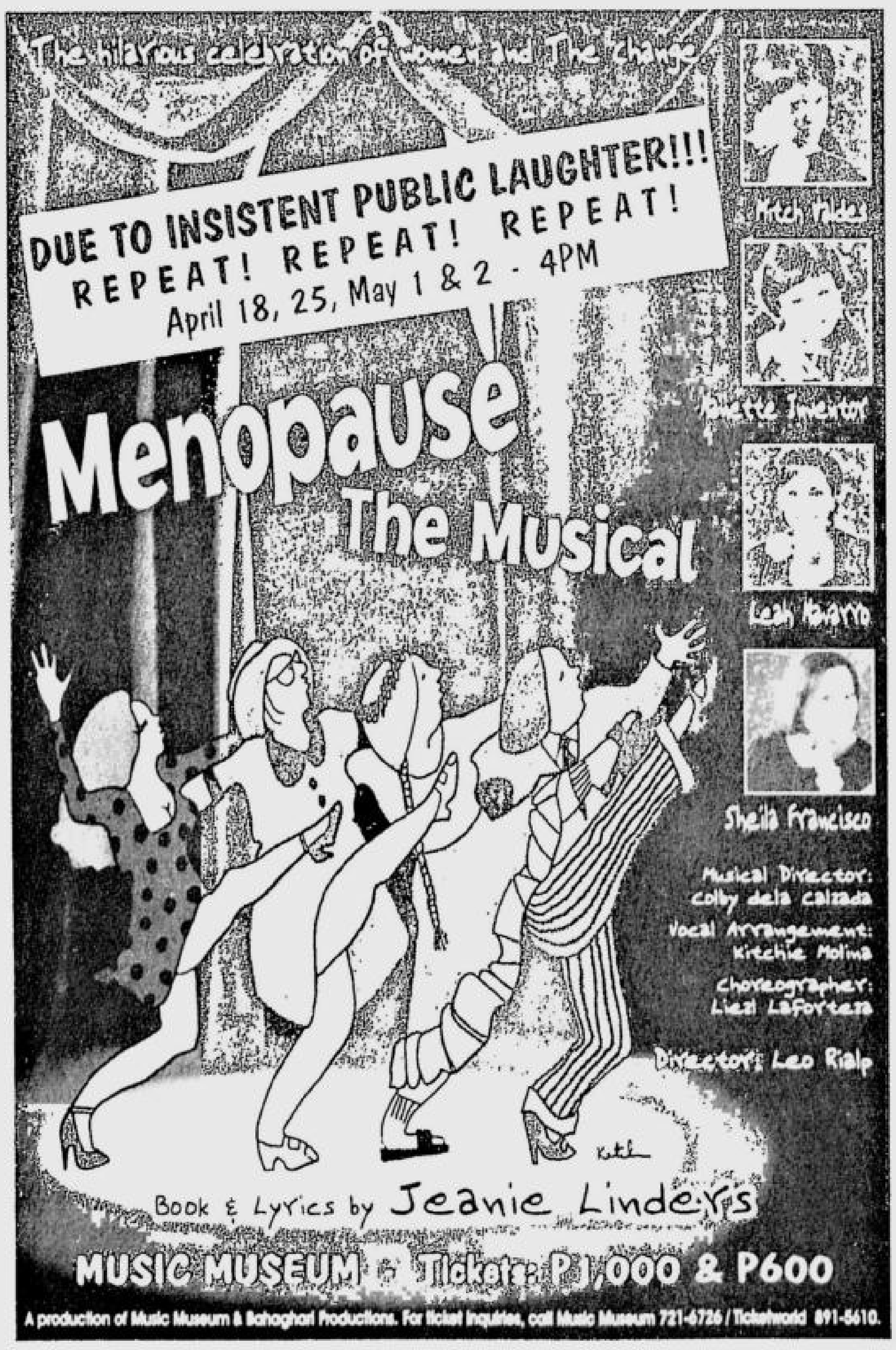
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Gandalfs...

From page G3

Exposing Valentino

The magic industry has generated controversy over the years, especially after the notorious 1998 "Exposed" series on "Secrets Revealed: Breaking the Magician's Code."

The masked magician, Valentino, got the outrage of magicians throughout the world after he broke the code of secrecy. Upon revealing his identity (real name: Leonard Montana), he explained he wanted magicians to make new acts instead of repeating old ones.

When I asked how he felt about this, Raymundo replied, "I hate it. It's a terrible thing. Whoever produced that was obviously after the money. Valentino will never land a job in Las Vegas or anywhere—ever. [There are] a hundred ways to skin a cat; why do you have to skin it that way? For me, it's like telling a kid that there's no Santa Claus. You give a kid a lollipop and then you take it back. They lose the wonderment; that's what it's all about."

Magicians everywhere agreed. "Would you want to watch a comedian if you knew all the punch lines? Would you read a good mystery if the surprise ending was on the front page? Of course you wouldn't, so why remove the enjoyment from magic?" said David Copperfield (www.magiciansalliance.com).

Side-show freak

In the Philippines, magicians have not been given the easy road either. It's a shame that the Filipino stereotype of the magician is of a sideshow freak. It is not unusual for an obnoxious audience to heckle a magician. In general, society looks down on the art.

Raymundo knows the pervasive air of illusion. "You don't have to know any language to communicate with magic. I've done a few tricks for Chinese people who couldn't speak English and they understood."

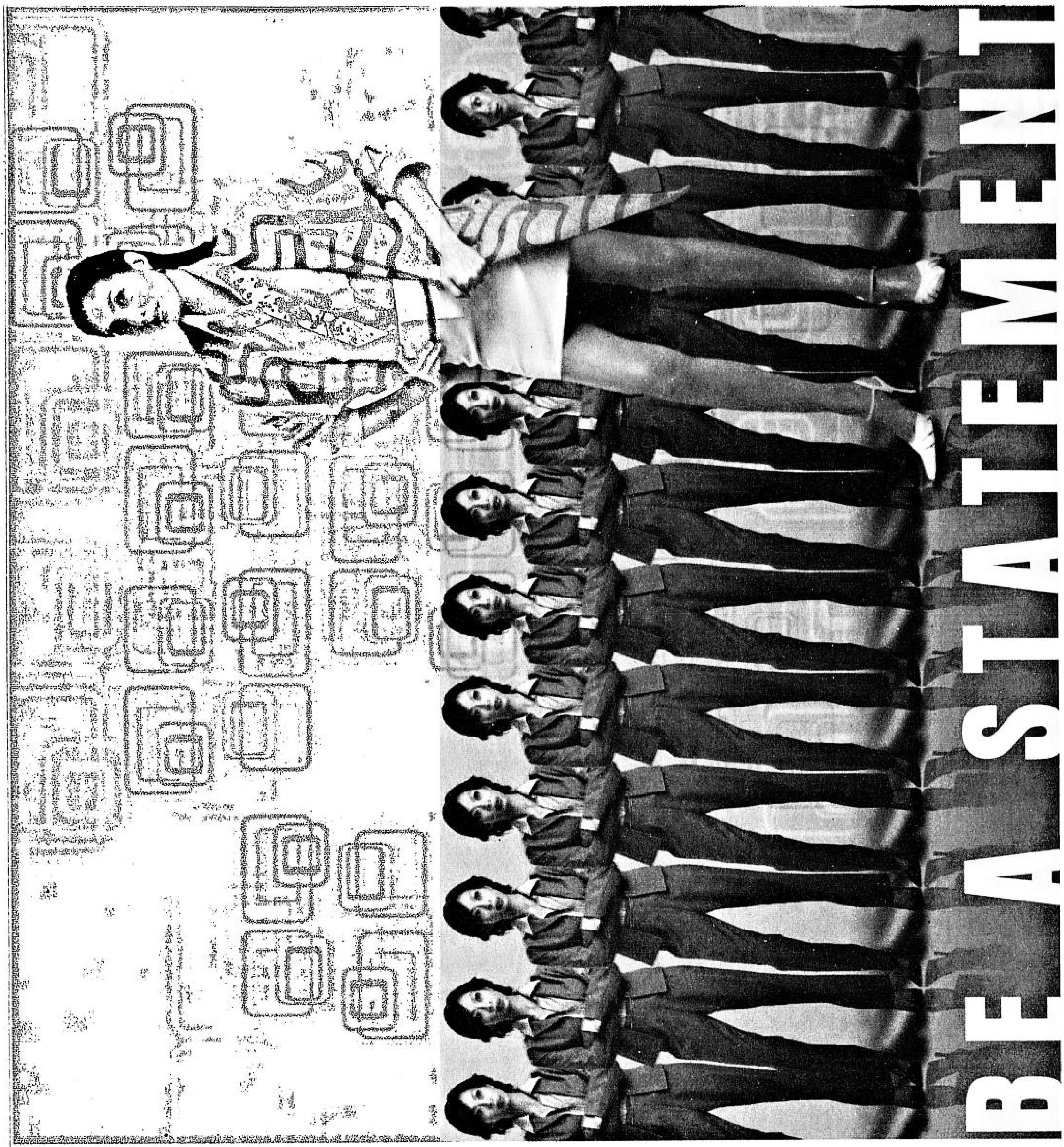
One of Raymundo's greatest experiences as a magician was when he did a few tricks for autistic kids.

"It was a sponge ball trick. In my hand, I made it disappear, [then] put it in (the autistic child's) hands. He opened it and he found the sponge ball. So when he reacted, a caregiver said, 'It's a miracle! He never reacted since he got here.'

"How can you not love that?" he adds. "I've gained many friends, a lot of girls, and I've made an autistic child react. What more can you ask for?"

Perhaps the experience shows the relevance of magic. The years may have made all of us older, but the inner child in us still remains untainted and pure—through magic.

E-mail the author at cathy_young1@yahoo.com



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